

CRICKET AND
HOW TO PLAY IT

AUTHOR'S APOLOGY.

I am sorry to have to bore the reader with some personal data but I desire to be different from those writers about cricket who do not sign their names to what they write but who give lots of very bad advice to young players nevertheless. It should be a *sine qua non* that all who advise or who attempt to teach any game should have had long practical experience, most of it in good company, of the game they write about.

I first played cricket in 1884 and last in 1922; hitting the last ball bowled to me (and that was in a match labelled first-class, at Lord's) for six. Since packing up after that game I have not touched a bat. Curiously enough, the last ball bowled to me in India, on December 2nd, 1899, at Bangalore, was also hit for six.

I played on 24 different grounds in India and Ceylon between 1884-1899, and perhaps I still hold the individual record score hit at Wellington, Nilgiris; Ootacamund, Nilgiris; Yercaud, Shevaroy's; and Bellary, *viz.* :—165 not out, 225 not out, 180 and 246, respectively.

In May, June and July 1898, three successive innings, with three weeks between the first two matches and a fortnight between the next two, were 180, 246 and 120. These 546 runs for 3 successive innings may be still the record for three successive innings by a resident in India, I don't know.

My aggregate between August 1892 and December 1899 in India and Ceylon (playing in only 18 matches in 1894 and 1895 and only 18 in 1899) was 7,832 for 161 completed innings, average 48·64. During the same period I made 21 centuries and took 713 wickets for 6,494 runs, average 9·1 per wicket for the whole period of 7½ years. Roughly, this was a case of 1,000 runs and 100 wickets for every year.

Between August 1st 1897 and July 31st 1898 I made 2,665 runs for 19 completed innings, average 140·2.

Between August 1892 and December 1899 I made seven "ducks," one a year on average.

In England I made 66 centuries, one of them being still the record for the beginning of a three day first-class county match, to wit, 107 between 12-5 p.m. and 1-12 p.m. That was in 1904 at Birmingham, so has stood for 25 years and at the present rate of marching backwards, looks like staying until the crack of Doom.

Other efforts in my first-class cricket career, which was cut short by the need to earn my bread and butter, were 181, 106 and 107, all against Surrey in the days of Richardson, Lockwood, N. A. Knox, Lees and Smith (W.C.); and two of these were the "first century of the season," the only other player to *twice* score the first hundred of the season being Denton of Yorkshire.

Perhaps my best score was 66 in fourth innings on a worn wicket at Old Trafford (in the days before the late Sam Apted had shown them how to prepare a first-class wicket there) against Barnes (S.F.), Sharp, Cuttell and W. Brearley, all these in their prime.

In a Club match I made 148 out of 152 from the bat while I was in, while six wickets fell, and have twice made three centuries in a week, one of these being for a Minor County Eleven.

Altogether, I have made 87 centuries and taken over 1,500 wickets.

As regards fielding "W. G." always told me to stand in the out field "where you think best and I've never said that to anybody else." In my first season in first-class cricket I held 28 catches out of 31 chances.

As a boy I threw a cricket ball 117 yards, and after I was 30 threw one over 100 yards.

The only article concerning Cricket which has ever given me trouble to write—not to mention shame!—is this Apology.

And so, the magic word, beloved of all true cricketers:—

"PLAY!!"

CONTENTS

BATTING.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. What is Batting?	1
II. The Drive	3
III. The Cut	7
IV. The Leg-Glance	10
V. Placing to Leg	13
VI. The Hook and the Pull	16
VII. The Forward Stroke, and the Stance	20
VIII. Back Play	27

BOWLING.

IX. What is Bowling?	30
X. Bowling Grips:—The Straight Ball	32
The Off-Break	32
The Leg-Break	32
XI. The Swerve	34
The Change of Pace	36
XII. The Delivery	38
XIII. Fast Bowling	39
XIV. Medium and Slow	
Bowling	45
Flighting the Ball	47
The Googlie	48
XV. Wicket-keeping	52
XVI. Captaincy	55
XVII. Umpiring	61
XVIII. Care of Equipment	65
XIX. General Training and Practice Hints	70
XX. Fielding	74
XXI. The Priceless Spirit of Cricket	79

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CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS BATTING ?

Batting is the Art of making runs for the side for which you are playing,

NOT FOR YOURSELF.

Your whole interest must be concentrated upon what your Side wants. Most Sides want runs; but there are times, especially if you are by nature a slow steady batsman who is quite unaccustomed to score quickly or who does not know how to score quickly, when the best thing you can do for your Side is to get out.

The first general rule of batting is that in all strokes the bat *must hit* and not be hit by the Ball. The only exception to this rule is on the few occasions when to save your side from defeat *in the fourth innings* and at no other time in the match you are bound in honour to try to play only defensive cricket. Then, if the ball frequently hits the bat, you are batting well and are playing true cricket.

Such occasions are very rare indeed and they never occur in the first innings. Steadiness there must always be in batting but it is, as a rule, very greatly overdone and is often indulged in when there is need to force matters.

There can be no good Batting unless in *all* strokes played to good-length *straight* balls the Bat, whether for Forward or Back strokes, is wielded straight. That is, with its blade always perpendicular to the surface of the wicket for some time before and some time after it has played the Ball.

Any deviation from that rule is Unsound Batting and can never be anything else, however successful in the main are its results.

Only two batsmen whose bats have not been or are not truly straight, before and after impact with the Ball, have ever succeeded in first-class cricket. They are Abel (R.) of Surrey and Hendren (E.) of Middlesex.

Everyone of the other big successes as Batsmen has wielded a straight blade.

It is always better to get at the bowling before it gets at you. Attack and *not* Defence is the better policy, though without Defence a Batsman is only half armed for his task.

The reasoning is simple and is this:—It is the Bowler who starts the game by bowling the ball. All Bowlers are human, therefore prone to err. Consequently of any given, say, average twenty balls (not purposely bowled in an attempt to refute this statement) more than half will pitch a Bad Length, and therefore a scorable Length. This may not always be true of first-class bowling, but it is *certainly* true of average School and Club and Gymkhana bowling. This being so, there should be a corresponding response of more than ten Attacking strokes, on average, out of every twenty. But that is precisely just what does not happen. Except in happy-go-lucky inter-regimental matches, and some inter-school matches.

Therefore, the young player who decides to enjoy life by hitting the ball instead of being hit by it, or letting it hit his bat, must concentrate upon Attack.

He need not abandon, or shirk, the study of Defence in order to do this; but he must, for the good of his Side which must be his lodestar, work out the happy mean and aim at being that best of all Batsmen an Attacking Defensive player.

I hope in the following pages to have written much that will put him on the right path. Indeed I am sure I have done so if he will only respond by (a) avoiding the Two-Eyed Stance, which I was the first writer on the game to openly and severely condemn (which I did over twenty years ago!) and (b) always swing his blade straight for every good length straight ball bowled. Without these two things he can never be a Batsman.

CHAPTER II.

THE DRIVE.

The main object to be aimed at when driving a cricket ball is to hit it, whether along the ground or in the air, clear of the fieldsmen.

Consequently, it is just as essential, when making a big hit, to try to "place" the ball as it is to place it when making any other kind of stroke such as the Cut or the Leg Glance. By "placing" is meant hitting it to any clear place in the field, or through any clear gap among the fieldsmen who are stationed near the wicket. Now, it is no simple matter to explain in print how this "placing" is to be done. Even the practical demonstration of a good player will fail to produce the stroke in willing imitators. Otherwise, there would be many more placers of their big hits in first-class cricket than there are, especially in England where the Jamsaheb gave an example in his day of a kind that was unique. Nobody ever placed big hits as he did. Let me give an example.

It is the normal procedure to take an off-break "on the rise" and to hit it to the on-side of the wicket. So much is this the accustomed practice (because it is the easiest way of hitting an off-break if you are going to hit it at all) that bowlers purposely bowl off-breaks to a field stationed as seen in Diagram 1. Now, Ranjitsinhji with an infinite and justifiable belief in his eyesight and quickness of movement, decided that he had no use for the fielders stationed at 1, 2, 3 on Diagram 1. So he aimed, and aimed very successfully, for the area * * * in that Diagram. That space is always left blank by off-break bowlers when a man is hitting, for two reasons:

- (a) it is very difficult to hit accurately there;
- (b) it is well to tempt the young and innocent, and sometimes the old and hardened also, to try to make the mistake of a miss-hit when attempting to achieve a very difficult stroke.

The result of this was that Ranjitsinhji—I prefer the old cricket title with its tang of centuries and effort-

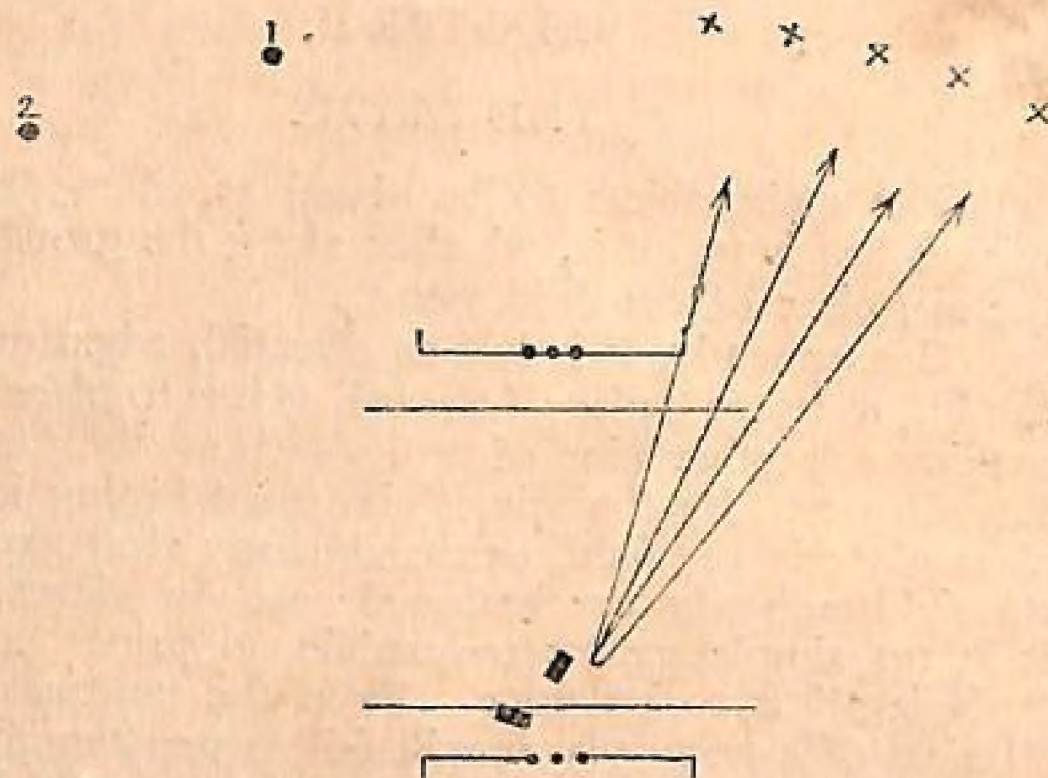


Diagram 1:—The "Placed" Off-Drive.

less batting to any other—was alone in the cricket world in bringing this stroke to well-nigh a pitch of perfection. Hence the paucity of imitators and the deplorable fact that, bar accidents, such strokes are never seen in modern cricket.

ALL THE MORE REASON THEN THAT ALL YOUNG MEN SHOULD STRIVE TO BE BETTER PLAYERS THAN THEIR IMMEDIATE PREDECESSORS WHO HAVE FAILED TO CARRY ON THE RANJITSINHJI TRADITION.

The way to do it? Unfortunately I cannot put the clock back and give, or try to, a practical demonstration of how to hit the off-break for fours towards long-off. I have hit a ball in a match 147 yards, hit to pitch, and I have hit a ball from Lockwood (Surrey and England) in a first-class match over a fence that was 132 yards from the wicket I was hitting from. I have "missed the clock" at Kennington Oval pavilion by less than five feet in a county match, so my young reader can trust me not to lead him astray. Not one of these three hits was in the long-off direction, all were "over" long-on, a good way over, *en passant*! My advice is to leave the

off-break drive alone until you have mastered the on-drive.

This is hit by quickly shifting the hands as far up the handle as you can *comfortably* place them and either—

- (1) by jumping a good yard down the wicket and hitting the ball instantly "on the rise," or
- (2) taking two shuffling steps straight down the wicket and hitting the ball "on the rise," or
- (3) standing firm on the right foot, stretching the left out a comfortable stride, and hitting the ball "on the rise."

These are all "sixer" Drives, "home and glory" strokes in the picturesque language of the dressing-room. They can be acquired only by *frequent* practice in the nets by everyone who is at all inclined to hit as his natural game.

SUCH A YOUNGSTER SHOULD NEVER UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES BE SNUBBED, OR CURBED, BY COACHES.

These are unfortunately rather too ready to stop a young hitter from practising his natural game. Instead of encouraging him to use the bat *for its chief purpose* they are for ever worrying him about Defence and playing steadily, and all that grandmotherly advice which has made of Test and first-class cricket the dull and boring performance it too often is.

Ignoring the "Sixer" or "lifted" ball, I will deal now with the "Four" or "kept-down" ball. The two Drives are absolutely different. They cannot be made off the same kind of ball for one thing. The "Four" Drive is a forcible exploitation of the plain forward stroke. Many and many a four have I hit without any fielder having the slightest chance of stopping the ball after my *first intention* had been a plain *defensive* forward stroke. While the ball was in the air it was seen that it would pitch a half-volley and instantly the first intention was changed to the decision to force matters. Everything, position, bat uplifted, left foot out, was in favour of a hard hit being made with all the force at one's command, and so the stroke was attempted. Timing, if accurate, weight of body and arm did the rest.

These, allied to one other thing, will always "do the rest." That one other may be the most important thing of all. It is, that the bat, after hitting the ball, **MUST** follow through along the line of the departing ball for as far as one's length of arm will allow it to do. I endeavour in Diagrams 2 and 3 to convey my meaning. The young cricketer whose bat follows the curve shown in Diagram 3 will never play for All India. His friend, whose bat follows the dotted line in Diagram 2, may; indeed will if he can field.

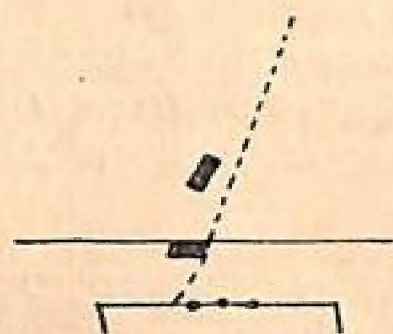


Diagram 2:—*The Correct "Follow-through" for an off-Drive.*

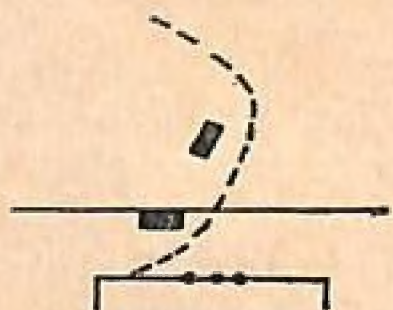


Diagram 3:—*The Wrong "Follow-through" for an Off-Drive.*

Finally if you mean to drive, **DRIVE!** and don't play about with it.

HIT FOR ALL THE WEIGHT AND MUSCLE, AND WILL TO HIT, THAT IS IN YOU.

Half-measures you must leave to fraudulent trades-people to deal with. Your hit must be twenty annas to the rupee, twenty-five chataks to the seer; rather more than that until you are fifty years of age.



Tate (Sussex & England) The true edgewise delivery. (See page 38.)



Hobbs, half way through the cut off the left leg. The right foot has not moved, the left foot is beyond the line of the off-stump. (See page 7.)

CHAPTER III.

THE CUT.

There is only one way to Cut, so far as the arms are concerned, and that is —

WITH BOTH ARMS AND ELBOWS WELL OUT FROM THE RIBS.

This is the cardinal principle, *the* secret of all good, all genuine Cutting. Here and there, like a fluke at billiards or two birds falling to one cartridge, a Cut will be made and four runs scored—nay even a “Sixer” perhaps, for such has been Cut ere this and will be, I hope, again—with one or both elbows tucked in to the batsman’s sides, but the Way to Cut is to adopt the mental attitude that it “can’t be done” unless both elbows are well free of the sides.

The stationing of the feet is quite another matter. While the True Cut is always made off the right foot, *i.e.*, with the right foot thrown across the wicket and, if necessary, beyond the off-stump, it is undeniable that there have been many sweet fours Cut with the right foot on the line of the leg-stump and the left thrown across the wicket and down the wicket.

There is a very sound, irrefutably sound, reason why the left-foot-across Cut is *not* the better of the two. This is because by throwing the left-foot across the wicket the batsman gratuitously lessens his own chance of accurate sighting of the ball. The young player has only to “shape up” in front of a large looking-glass with a walking-stick, or the inevitable umbrella of Ind, as though on an imaginary wicket and go through the evolutions of these two Cuts to see *where and how he is looking* (as regards the bowler). In the case of the left-foot-across he will find himself gazing over his left shoulder *almost* one-eyed. That is, if he is a right-hander, with his left eye. It may so happen that his left is his Master-eye. The Master-eye is not the same in us all.

Which it is may be discovered at once by pointing the first finger of the right hand at any object, say the

handle of a door a few feet away. Then, holding the finger still pointed, shut the left eye. If the finger still points straight at the door handle then the right eye is the Master-eye. But, if on closing the left eye the finger is pointing to one side of the door handle then the *left* eye is the Master-eye; and if the right eye is closed the finger will be seen pointing at the door-handle.

Every cricketer ought to know which is his Master-eye—and Cut accordingly.

I will assume now that the player has decided upon the right-foot-across Cut. The procedure to play the stroke is as follows:

Firstly, NEVER attempt it at a good length ball of any direction.

Secondly, lift yourself to your full height, or as nearly so as comfortably possible, in getting ready for the final stroke "at" the ball.

Thirdly, always with the elbows well out from the ribs, raise the bat rather *up* over the right shoulder—thereby compelling a downward stroke when actually hitting—than merely *round* the body.

Fourthly, if you are really Cutting, rather than pushing or placing a fast bowler, hit hard.

You may just as well hurt the fielder who happens to get in the way while you are about it, and a hard hit Cut gives third man all the less chance of getting to the ball. As you can always count on two runs for a Cut that sends the ball, unchecked, past the In-fields (that is, if you and your partner know anything about Running between Wickets) it is just as well to give the ball just that very slight additional impetus which means two more runs if you hit it hard enough so that Third Man is unable to get to it.

Further, the harder the hit the less likely is "Gully" or Third Slip to catch the ball should you miss-hit, or snick, it to either, and the more it hurts any fielder who stops it. All these points are strongly in favour of Cutting Hard when attempting the stroke.

I am absolutely opposed to the oft-taught doctrine which is in opposition to that which I have attempted to expound. It is *certainly* NOT safer to Cut gently.

You get "caught slip" much more easily from a gentle than from a fierce Cut, and your gentle Cut is an easy job for any active Third Man. The sledge hammer is more useful than the rapier for this stroke. "Pinking" is not the aim and object of the most attractive stroke in the game. I want four, no more and no less, for my Cut; and, like not a few others, I have ere now got a Six for it.

Though never such a remarkable one as that scored when the worst batsman who ever played for England, my esteemed friend W. M. Bradley of Kent, once "cut" one of the best fast bowlers who ever bowled for England, the late Tom Richardson, into the pavilion at the Oval. This Six was not, I am at liberty to add, intentional!

The effect of the second and third preliminaries mentioned above, if properly carried out, is that the player first gets a better sight of the ball and gets over it in one and the same action, and then, if he hits the ball at all he hits it down on to the ground.

Finally, the Cut needs more practice than any other stroke in the game. And it is very difficult to practise it unless your practice bowler faithfully bowls to order.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LEG-GLANCE.

This is one of the easiest strokes to play off a certain kind of ball. Unfortunately the stroke generally gets far more applause than it is worth. It is, for one thing, nothing like so difficult a stroke to bring off successfully as is the Cut. As I hope to show.

Perfect timing is the essence of the contract here, as in most cases where a moving ball has to be dealt with. The "easiness" of the stroke rests in the fact that whereas in the case of the Drive, the Cut, the Hook and the Pull force and placing ability must be used to ensure anything like sustained success, with the Leg-Glance the player utilises the original momentum imparted by the bowler and turns it to his own profit with a minimum expenditure of physical effort. Very little placing ability is required because (a) fields are so frequently badly placed that there is nobody on the leg-side to save the four, and (b) it is not very difficult to defeat the only "leg" who can usually be spared for that position. No force is required because, even from a slow-medium bowler, a ball glanced on the leg-side will often get to the boundary before the nearest fielder.

All that is required is accuracy of stroke and the timing of it. I have read and have heard all manner of fairy tales about the need for turning over the wrists and "stuff" like that for the proper completion of this stroke but I beg of my young readers if they, too, have suffered this same foolishness to forget it at once and try the following methods.

There are obviously only two kinds of balls which can be properly used for the Leg-Glance, these are the well pitched-up ball on the leg-stump or on the pads, and the much shorter ball also pitching on the line of the leg-stump or the pads.

The indisputable fact that Ranjitsinhji introduced the Leg-Glance and scored fours with it off balls pitching on the middle stump makes no difference to my counsel

here given. I am writing for young and ordinary cricketers, not for wizards and supernaturals!

Dealing with the two kinds of delivery above-mentioned in the order I have chosen in which to name them the following method will score many fours off the well pitched-up ball. It is simply this:— Play straight forward down the line of the advancing ball with the blade of the bat facing towards forward short leg—the ball, if you have judged its "line" accurately, will do the rest. The batsman must play neither too soon nor too late, just as for all scoring strokes.

If too soon he will overreach and cause the right hand edge of the blade to meet the ball, "killing" it or causing a catch-and-bowl chance.

If too late the ball will either hit him on the pad and go for leg-byes; or, if it pitched on the leg-stump it will bowl him or get him L. B. W. with his bent right knee in front of the leg-stump.

This well pitched-up ball is actually deflected by the bat almost as soon as it has risen from the pitch. By practice the batsman can certainly indulge in the art of "placing" this Glance very fine, or by a slight push at the ball at the instant of contact he can glance it wide of a fine long-leg. But in that case not a little of the bowler's momentum is taken from the ball and a four becomes less likely in consequence.

Now for the short-pitched leg-stump or pads ball. I observe a very common failing among young batsmen when this ball appears. I have done it myself and received my fair quota of thuds in the ribs in consequence. The tendency of every ball, from a right-handed bowler, which pitches on the leg-stump is to continue in the leg-side direction. That is to say, "on to" the batsman. So much so that there have been known Captains who instructed their fast bowler to bowl this sometimes intimidating ball on purpose; and also cases of fast bowlers who needed no such instruction! It is usual for inexperienced batsmen—and some, too, of riper years!—to recede in the direction of short-leg when this leg-stump ball is bowled. It was an extremely long time before batsmen discovered that—;

THE SAFER METHOD FROM THE BATSMAN'S POINT OF VIEW IS TO MOVE FORWARD TOWARDS POINT INSTEAD OF BACK.

Not only safer but more paying, if, as the ball passes, the batsman plays the right stroke. Many attempt to score by a sort of flick at the passing ball offering only *the width* of the bat's blade to the ball.

A much better way is to offer the whole *length* of the blade in an across-the-flight movement, at the same time that the player moves across towards the off and turns his body towards short square leg. By moving across even only six inches he avoids all danger from a blow from the ball. By offering the whole length of the blade in a sweeping movement he increases *by at least six times* his chance of effecting contact between bat and ball over the player who presents only the *width* of the blade to the ball. I have scored innumerable fours in this manner on the strength of the Length v. Width theory alone. Moreover, it is easier, and more comfortable, to play the Length than it is the Width stroke.

It has to be remembered that this is in no sense a Hit but always a Glance. Should the ball prove to be much shorter than expected then there is time for a quick change of intention and for the intended Glance to become a sturdy hit to the square leg boundary or to the left of that region.

CHAPTER V.

PLACING TO LEG.

This stroke comes under a different category to the Leg-Glance although the Glance happens sometimes to be placed.

Placing to leg connotes the scoring of runs usually in singles and twos in the area marked **** on Diagram 4. Virtually mid-on is on the leg-side of the wicket and it is part and parcel of leg-side placing stroke-play to keep

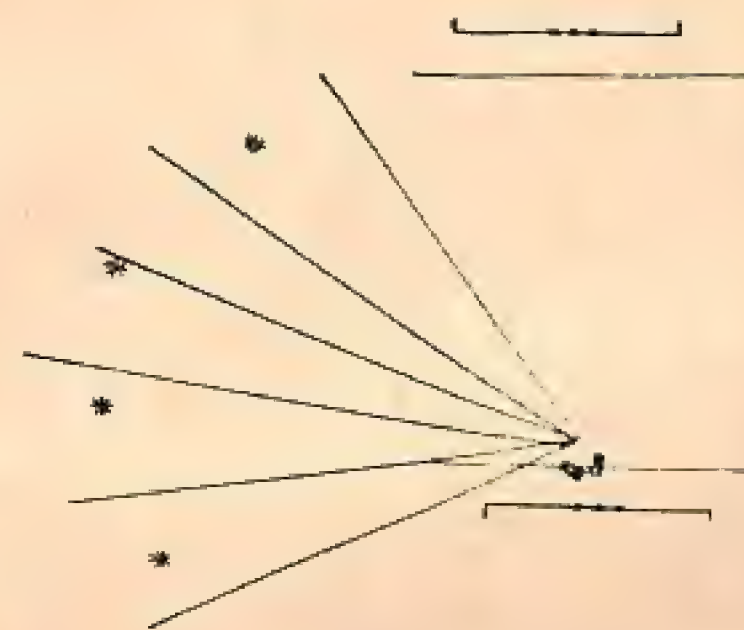


Diagram 4:—Placing to Leg.

mid-on on tenterhooks and well occupied. Life was never dull for a mid-on when Ranjitsinhji, C. B. Fry, Hayward or the late Arthur Shrewsbury were batting. They were the greatest scorers in this region the game has ever known. There is nobody playing to-day who is in the same class, not even Hobbs at his best, at forcing two or three runs where not even one run seemed likely in this area. The artists at placing to leg being reduced to four it is consequently not easy for one of the failures to describe the how, the when, and the why of this branch of batting so that a beginner may derive benefit from his description. Generally speaking all these strokes are based on Back Play, or what I will call semi-back play.

Although these players got, and their imitators try to get, many runs by a sort of half forward "push" off the pads which sent the ball just out of reach of one of the many fielders placed to stop these indulgences most placings to leg are the result of stepping back with the right foot, a shortening simultaneously of the grip of the bat handle by slipping the lower hand down towards the blade, and then, by strength of forearm and wrist, forcing the ball—and not only the short-pitched ball but the good length as well—in the chosen direction. This same direction is chosen by instinct and sense of position, so that the ownership of the bump of locality is a precious one; and I hazard the guess that all three players above named possessed this valuable bump. As in all other cases perfect timing is necessary, but that which is also imperative is muscular forearm power. Both Fry and Hayward were very well armed in this direction, and Shrewsbury, stockily built, got vast numbers of his runs by forearm and wrist play almost entirely.

Hayward's method was rather more a forward one from a slightly crouched stance. I have seen him shape to play an apparently ordinary defensive forward push, pause the slightest of instants, and then, swerving slightly round to the on thus bringing the right shoulder well into action, he would as it were play forward towards a very forward short square leg direction. Nor did it need a leg-side ball for the accomplishment of this stroke. Hayward got scores of runs off absolutely straight pitched balls in this manner. Here and there on hard dry grounds such a stroke would reach the boundary. This must have been the case often in Australia where, as on the easier English wickets, once a good batsman is "in" he can take all kinds of liberties with impunity provided he avoids the one unpardonable liberty which is: "NEVER play *across the flight* of a straight ball." This is one of the golden rules of Batting which has been broken successfully by only one man in the whole history of the game, and that was G. L. Jessop.

The Way to Place to Leg is, then, the way which best suits the individual, who, it must be taken for granted at the start, is by nature more of a sticker, or steady-type

of batsman, than a hitter. If I saw a natural hitter in a net who was in his teens I should not think of encouraging him to make a study of this stroke granted though it is that the ideal is a player who has *all* the strokes. The player I have just named, G. L. Jessop, may be said to have never purposely placed to leg in his life, not in the Fry-Hayward sense at all events. It would not have paid him to have wasted time over the stroke. Consequently, first get your naturally inclined steady player and let him practise and perfect this stroke. It is extraordinary how very useful to the total are the singles and twos scored on the leg-side by the watchful player who can so "push" the ball as to cause it to elude the clutches of mid-on, forward short-leg, and short-leg behind the umpire, who are the three fielders most concerned in stopping the stroke.

I have so far alluded only to one kind of ball, the straight one pitching on or about the leg-stump as being turned to account by clever on-side placing players. But there are two other deliveries which annually yield a big quota of runs to those who know how to utilise them. These are the badly pitched off-break from a right-hander to a right-hander and the left-hander's in-swinging ball to a right-handed batsman. The natural direction of both these deliveries is towards leg. It is up to the batsman to encourage this factor, and to harness it to his side's advantage by speeding the ball on its natural route. This can be done by a firm push, or by a turn of both wrists, or by a mere glancing stroke, much as shewn in the case of the Leg Glance.

Care has always to be taken that the fielders on the leg-side do not quietly alter their positions after the ball is in flight. It is of course understood that the batsman has previously fixed in the eye of his mind exactly where all these nuisances are stationed. He must, before shaping up to "address" the bowler, take a look round, *without looking*, to see exactly where each fielder is standing.

He must do this before every ball.

Doing so is part and parcel of the art of placing to leg.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HOOK AND THE PULL.

It is a curious fact that in modern cricket writings, particularly in reports of matches, these two absolutely different strokes are almost invariably confused, and are written about as though they are one, to wit, the Pull. Whereas, there is as much difference between the two as there is between a forced four on the off after stepping back, and an off-driven four hit from a half-volley.

For a Pull the left foot goes down the wicket, the right remains firm; for a Hook the right goes across the wicket and the left is brought back: See Diagrams.

Put briefly the Pull is a *long-arm stroke* hit after the left foot has been reached out as far down the wicket as possible, the right foot rarely, if ever, having been moved and the batsman often crouching to make the stroke.

The Hook is a *short-arm stroke* with the right hand quickly shifted down the handle to near the blade, the right foot moved across beyond the off-stump, and the batsman erect with his chest facing the bowler as he hits the ball.

The only similarity between the two strokes is that both send the ball, if hit, on the on-side of the wicket. Whereas, too, a "Sixer" is often Pulled, it is very rare to Hook a "Sixer."

Another difference between the two is that no batsman can "hook" a well pitched-up ball. Only short-pitched balls can be "hooked." Also, while a straight ball may be easily "hooked" if it pitched short enough, only a very lucky and always rash batsman attempts to "pull" a straight ball.

Both strokes are across the line of flight of the advancing ball and are, therefore, unsound strokes.

How true this is the reader can judge from himself when I tell him that Grace told me: "I never played a straight ball on the on-side until I was over 40 (that is to say, after he had been playing in first-class cricket for over twenty seasons), and then only after I had been batting a long time." Soundness of stroke was the keynote of his batting.

Dealing first with the Pull (Diagram 5), this is the stroke for a ball of just more than good length pitching just outside the off stump. The batsman, gripping the handle as high up as he can, flings out his left foot as far as he can towards the pitch of the ball and hits at it with a slanting blade right across and up its line of advance, judging his stroke to make contact with the ball just after it has risen from the ground.

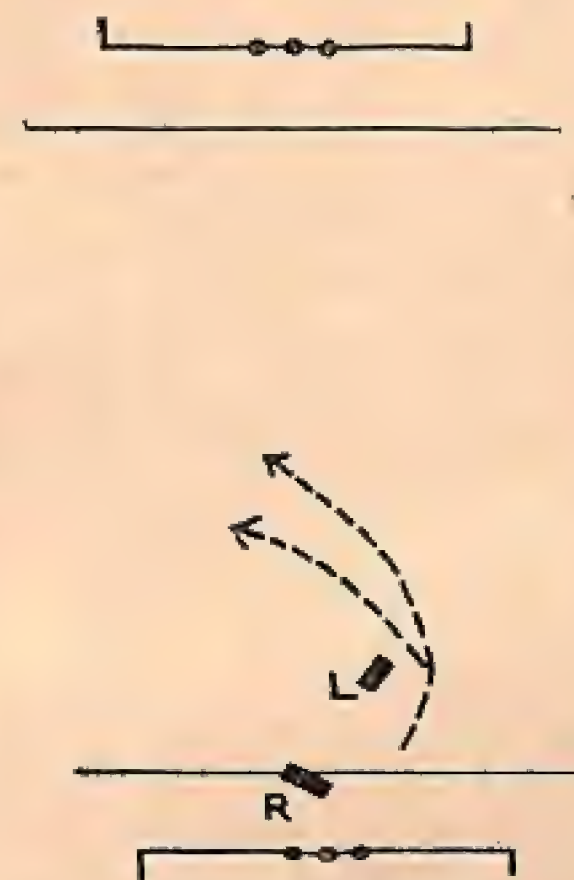


Diagram 5:—The Pull.

Properly timed this stroke sends the ball the furthest distance the batsman can hit it. Practically all the longest hits in cricket have been made off balls that have been "pulled" more or less. The late A. E. Trott's famous hit which, clearing the ornamental coping along the ridge of the present pavilion roof at Lord's landed the ball on the reverse slope, therefore, not "clean over" the pavilion, was a "pulled" hit. When M. C. Bird hit an off-break from Hazlitt, the Australian slow bowler of the 1912 team, into the top of the elm tree on the right of the pavilion at the Oval—every yard of 130, this hit—that was a lifted pull.

Choice of ball and timing are the essentials for the "Pull." It is a simple stroke if the right ball has been chosen, and has the merit of "looking awful" if the player has attempted it at the wrong ball.

The "Hook" is best played at a rather short off-break pitching off the wicket. In fact, the short-pitched off-break is the easiest ball of all to hook. To give an illustration. I was playing in a club game, and knew that the chief bowler of the opposition relied almost entirely on his off-break. I heard also that he had a reputation for pitching short. So I won the toss and went in first—this not being my first game of cricket! Before he began to bowl I made up my mind to "hook" the first ball if it offered even an inch of shortness. True to type he made the very common error of not pitching well up—half volleys are better than anything to a newcomer!—and served me the very thing the doctor ordered. What *could* I do? When the umpire had finished laughing at his mate, who in the most confiding manner had perched himself on a shooting-stick off which I all but "hooked" him, he signalled a rather obvious four—and that bowler ceased to bowl for the rest of the innings. We won.

The "Hook" requires quick and accurate footwork. It may be said that any fool can hook if only he is in the right position. As a matter of fact that is true of any ball in cricket. If you, the batsman, are there first the bowler has a poor chance.

Consequently, POSITIONING, OBTAINED BY QUICK FOOTWORK, WHICH CANNOT BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT INSTANT PERCEPTION OF WHAT KIND OF BALL HAS BEEN BOWLED IS THE BEGINNING AND THE END OF ALL SUCCESS IN BATTING.

The instant, therefore, you perceive that a shortish off-break, or a plain very short straight ball, has actually been bowled slip the right hand down the blade (in order to give you much better bat-command than you had before), move your right foot across (see Diagram 6) in front of the off-stump and face the oncoming ball. At the right moment hit it as hard as you can, of course timing the stroke so that you effect contact with the driving

part of the blade, *i.e.*, from about four inches to ten inches from the end of it. You will previously have taken a mental photograph of the positions of the In-fields as well as of deep square leg, so that you will avoid "hooking" the ball "down their throats" as the saying is. For this is the chief danger, because the area towards which this stroke is made is the blind-side, and in it fielders, who seek your life, shift about uncannily and silently when you are not looking, like the treacherous folk they are.



Diagram 6:—*The Hook.*

Both Hook and Pull are strokes well worth perfecting because (a) there is no dearth of the right kind of ball for the strokes, (b) the making of these strokes enables the player to enjoy to the full the game he is playing in, since the bat is in his hands as a weapon wherewith to hit the ball good and hearty. The more often the better for every body—not excepting the bowler. If he is worth his salt the bowler enjoys the game much more when the batsman is attempting strokes than "playing" as though he was being photographed for the films.

CHAPTER VII

THE FORWARD STROKE.

The most reliable, and valuable, stroke in Cricket. I do not mind in the least with what Authorities and Coaches I fall foul when I say that—

ALL SOUND BATTING, ALL STROKE-PLAY, ALL ATTACK, ALL GRACE AND ATTRACTIVENESS IN BATTING IS BASED, FOUR SQUARE, UPON ABILITY TO PLAY FORWARD WITH A STRAIGHT BLADE.

Also, that the best defensive stroke in Cricket is the full flowing forward stroke, which “kills the ball at the pitch.”

I am glad to differ with those who disagree with this last dictum, because it is to their disagreement, which connotes that pride of place must be given to Back Play, that we owe almost everything, from backing up with the legs upwards, which is Ugly and Undesirable in Modern Cricket.

I have never seen the ball that was “killed” by a back-stroke which could not have been more gracefully and just as effectively killed by a forward stroke.

The difference in scoring value, therefore in effectiveness and match-finishing worth, between a Forward and a Back Stroke is just this that if having made up your mind to play forward defensively you find out in time that you have made a mistake and that the ball is really a half-volley or very nearly one (a very common error) it is possible to convert your defensive forward stroke into a four by using extra force at the eleventh hour. If, *au contraire*, you have decided to play back defensively and you discover the same error in your judgment of *length* (which is the whole crux of the matter)—

THEN YOU ARE HELPLESS, AND FIND YOURSELF THAT PITIABLE OBJECT, A BATSMAN PLAYING BACK TO A HALF-VOLLEY.

Which sad picture is to be seen over and over again in Modern Cricket, but which was rarely if ever seen

before Back Play became a fetish, based on the false theory: “Play Back or Hit.” A theory which really suited nobody but its originator, and he that batting genius, my friend the Jamsaheb of Nawanagar.

I have seen one of the most renowned batsman of the past ten years *frequently* step back, stop rather than play the ball and then *without stepping out of his crease* pat the ground where the ball pitched. Now, if that ball was not that gift of the gods, a plumb half-volley, what was it? Yet, the man who acts in this way has been chosen often for England *for his batting*, though he is when in action so often a perfect example of how NOT to bat.

I preface what I have to say about Forward Play in this manner on purpose to try to get my young readers, to concentrate more upon that branch of Batting than they are generally advised to do. The usual rule is to teach youngsters Back Play first while dinning it into them that Forward Play will follow. I am tooth and nail opposed to this doctrine, regarding it as false for one thing and damaging to the best interests of the game for another. Safety First is a splendid rule in these days of fools at the driving wheel but it is a rule for the public highroad and not for the cricket field. It is this thoroughly bad doctrine of Defence First which is responsible for most of the entirely dull and strokeless cricket of the present era.

Teach a youngster to keep the ball out of his wicket at all costs, and never to attempt a Risk Stroke and you teach him to stay a longer time at the wicket than he otherwise would. That is granted. But at the same time you do not teach him to make scoring strokes. Hence the dulness which is complained of wherever “public” cricket is played, though seldom or never in the Regimental, the *pukka* Amateur, the Gymkhana and the Club sections of the Cricket world. In these sections much more interesting, and truer, cricket is played as a rule than is ever to be seen now, except on rare occasions, in Test or County cricket. That is because of the overcoaching by thoughtless Coaches which hangs over the two latter.

A BUDDING CRICKETER SHOULD LEARN AND BUILD UP HIS BACK GAME AFTER PERFECTING HIS FORWARD GAME, BUT NOT BEFORE.

The reason is that the human instinct causes a healthy boy with a bat in his hand to want to hit the ball as hard and as often as he can before all else. Now, no young boy is physically strong enough in the arms to *hit* a ball any appreciable distance if he plays back. Coaches either ignore, or forget, this which is about the most important factor in all coaching of young batsmen. By insisting upon Back Play, *i.e.*, Defence, first, they openly help to stifle a love for Cricket in the young—hence the everywhere noted overcrowding of the lawn tennis courts and the golf-links—and stunt all stroke-play and attacking effort. This is the absolutely inevitable result of the insistence of modern coaches upon Back Play first.

The same thing is acting adversely upon the bowling strength of the world of cricket which is *everywhere* weaker than it ever was before. I refer to this in another Chapter.

The first essential to perfection in Forward Play is a correct, and a manly Stance.

While it is true that in this, as in bowling grips of the ball and methods of delivery, each player must suit himself most comfortably because the most comfortable Stance is the best one, it is equally true that his choice of Stance must be governed by three things:—

- (1) He *must* stand with his chest square towards Point.
- (2) He *must* stand with his left shoulder towards the Bowler.
- (3) He *should* stand with his right foot about two inches inside the popping crease, his right toes pointing towards "gully," his left foot about six inches from the right and his weight comfortably distributed between both feet, with rather more of it on the right than the left.

It does not matter in the least if during the Stance either left or right toe is in front of the leg-stump. It is, indeed, an advantage to stand that way, because thus from

the outset the batsman is more *over* the ball and can, therefore, wield a straighter blade. Standing with the toe in front does *not* predispose to being given out L.B.W., as so much literature and so many coaches aver. I was not given out L.B.W. 40 times in forty years. Most first-class batsmen stand that way—if not all of them.

The type of Bowler will assist him to decide best as to the distribution of his weight before beginning his stroke. Thus, if a bowler is one who is constantly pitching short, thereby making Forward play almost impossible the weight should be rather more on the left foot in order to leave the right loose for *instant* stepping back to the straight balls, or across for the Cut. On the other hand on a fast wicket with a good length bowler operating the left foot must be free for the equally instant thrust, or lunge forward to play the ball soon after it pitches; thereby "killing" it and its break before the latter has had time to develop; or to Hit it hard if it is the least bit over-pitched.

Next to distribution of the batsman's Weight the most important thing is the Play, or waggle, of the bat while the bowler is running up. The Bat should *always* be lifted up straight backwards within the black lines and shaded area shown on Diagram 7. Even though

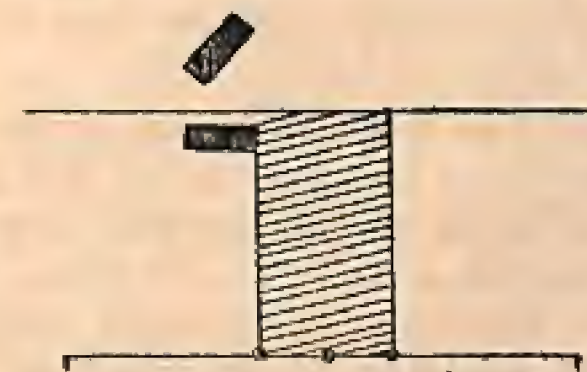


Diagram 7:—Bat uplift area.

many good, and some great, batsmen do not do this it is an absolutely sound thing for young batsmen to learn to do, because in this first movement is the secret of all Straight Batted play. The reason is this:—

IF THE BAT IS "TAKEN BACK" STRAIGHT IN THE FIRST INSTANCE IT MUST INEVITABLY BE BROUGHT BACK

STRAIGHT IN THE SECOND INSTANCE, AND THE SECOND INSTANCE CONSTITUTES THE BEGINNING OF THE FORWARD STROKE IN BATTING.

It is not only difficult, it is almost impossible, to play the bat straight back towards the stumps on the uplift and then to swing it back crookedly and off the line of the stumps. Let a young player take a bat and standing in front of a long looking glass, go slowly through the evolutions here counselled. He will then see for himself that this method up and down the line of the wicket cannot fail to produce a straight blade when the stroke is made, and to show the full width of the blade to the ball. That must be the main object of all batsmanship.

WHY, IF THE BLADE IS FOUR AND QUARTER INCHES WIDE, MAKE USE OF ONLY $3\frac{3}{4}$ INCHES OF IT?

Having perfected the initial movements the next thing to be quite sure about is that in going on with the stroke the left elbow points towards the Bowler, or even towards Mid-off. This action keeps the ball down. It is not possible to go right through with the stroke with the left elbow "up" but, by practice, it will be found that contact with the ball is effected while it is "up," and that *then* the elbow straightens out and the bat is allowed to follow through after the ball and along its line of departure.

The next thing to perfect is the precision of Footwork required to place the advancing left foot toe just inside the line of flight of the approaching ball. Then, by playing the bat just outside the left toe it follows, as the day the night, that the bat, wielded as here directed, *must* meet with its full-face the ball. This is inevitable, and the fact makes of the Forward Stroke the most reliable defensive stroke in the game, given, of course, that it is properly played from start to finish. Human proneness to err will undo the best of counsel, and the "clean bowled" of a player who has attempted this stroke will be readily put down by perfervid worshippers at the shrine of Back Play to the inherent weakness of the Forward Stroke. They will not make sufficient, if any, allowance



Lord Aberdare of Winchester, Oxford & Middlesex, playing the true Forward Attacking Stroke. The position is perfect. (See page 24.)



The correct stance, as the Author understands it. (See page 22.)



Shepherd of Surrey in action. (See page 7)



's grip for the straight one. (See page 32.)



Tate's grip for the Swerve. (See page 34.)

for the error in timing or bad judgment of length, but will simply condemn the method; and argue that if the "clean bowled" had played back he would still be there.

I have never seen a First-class batsman who did not *repeatedly* play forward *defensively*; excepting only Ranjitsinhji; his imitator, in this respect, C. B. Fry and the late Arthur Shrewsbury. The forward defensive stroke was as much part of Hayward's game and is as much part of that of Hobbs as was the Leg Glance part of Ranjitsinhji's. I leave this at that.

If it is true that the strong Back Player stays the longer it is equally true he does not make so many runs, or make those he makes so quickly as the strong Forward Player. Forward Stroke play is necessarily punitive first and is of infinitely greater value in three-day cricket than is Back play.

I conclude my advice on the Forward Stroke by assuring my young reader that having decided that the ball is one at which to play forward he will find that in the long run the number of over-pitched balls he will receive will astonish him. Consequently, when playing forward, as here shewn, he must be on the lookout *in every case* for the ball pitching a couple of feet or more nearer to him than he expected.

Then is the time to force the stroke and to HIT instead of merely to play the ball.

The converse does not hold good.

Having decided to play back the player will rarely find the ball shorter pitched than he expected at first. On the contrary, he will, as in the case of the forward stroke, find that the ball is pitching nearer to him than he expected and that he has voluntarily taken up the wrong position for dealing with it as it should be dealt with!

So-called strong Back Players are compelled more often to play the Half-Cock Stroke, which is neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor Bombay duck, but is a mere shuffle-out of a self-imposed difficulty, than are good Forward Players.

The reason for this is obvious. It is a matter of eyesight. Just as a ball going away from you, especially

if you have bowled or thrown it yourself, almost invariably seems to be pitching further from you than it actually does, so an advancing ball pitches nearer to you than it appears to be likely to do.

THIS IS THE SECRET OF THE DEADLINESS OF THE TRUE "YORKER," WHICH IS MISTAKEN FOR A HALF VOLLEY, AND WHICH RELIES FOR ITS SUCCESS MORE UPON THIS VISUAL DECEPTIVENESS THAN UPON ANYTHING ELSE.

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CHAPTER VIII.

BACK PLAY.

It is not possible to be a fully equipped Batsman unless the player can play back well.

In its way, and for Offensive as well as Defensive play, ability to play back is as essential as ability to play forward. The great difference is that most Attack and Hit is the result of Forward and not of Back Play, consequently most of the more effective strokes, and certainly the attractive ones, the Cut alone excepted, are Forward strokes.



Diagram 8:—Position of feet for Back Play.

A strong Back player has more scope on English than on any other grounds. This is not to say that Back play is unnecessary in India. It is vital everywhere the game is played, but in India and Australia the strong *straight* forward player is the one who delivers the goods. A man may play fast-footed in India and live through a season, but he will die early in England if he concentrates that way.

The first move in making a sound back stroke is to step the right foot back as far as the player can comfortably do so and ALWAYS WITH A STRAIGHT RIGHT KNEE to about a foot, or less, from the off and middle stumps. He must contrive, when doing so, to so twist his foot round that when the right foot comes to rest its toes—which at the original Stance were pointing towards backward point or third-man—are now pointing towards extra-coverpoint. Immediately the left foot follows the right and comes back to a spot in front of the leg and middle stumps. Vulgarly this is styled "covering up" and the mode is widely condemned in no uncertain terms by old

men, some of whom have never played cricket, as unfair, "not cricket," and several other things that make no difference to the practice and no impression whatsoever upon the practisers. The reason for this apparently-chilly reception for an easily understood adverse opinion is that IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLAY BACK THE RIGHT WAY WITHOUT "COVERING UP" THE STUMPS.

The reason why our forefathers never committed this awful crime is because they never—or seldom—played back. When they did not play forward, or cut, they got out of their trouble by playing the Half-Cock Stroke, or the Draw which, but for P. G. H. Fender, would be now an obsolete stroke. None of the old prints attempts to depict the genuine Back stroke, though all the others except the Pull and the Hook are shewn, which proves that none of the early great players, always excepting the late W. G. Grace, made a habit of the Back stroke.

While the two feet are taking up the right positions the batsman is so wielding his bat as to cause its downward swing to almost graze his right leg before continuing the stroke in front of both legs there to meet, and to "kill," the ball which the player has judged was of such a length that he could not kill it by any other means.

The foregoing sums up the Defensive Back Stroke which is very effective against any well pitched off-break or leg-break bowling and very fast bowling provided the ball is not rising or "bumping."

THE BEST WAY TO KILL THAT KIND OF BALL IS TO LEAVE IT ALONE. NOT AN EASY STROKE.

But Back Play is very far from being all Defensive in spite of the fact that Defence is its strong suit. Good players too often step right back and hit and hook fours for it to be doubted that moving the right foot back before the off-stump is either (a) Pad-play, or (b) the first action of a defensive movement pure and simple. It is this mode of converting defence into attack which gave birth to that very loose way of talking and writing cricket which tells us repeatedly that the star batsman of the hour was constantly converting good lengths into

long-hops and smashing them mercilessly. No good length was ever converted into a long-hop. The ball that was played back to and smashed was not a good length, to that particular batsman anyway. I have too often watched the two surest scorers off tolerably well-pitched bowling, to wit the late V. Trumper and Ranjitsinhji, to have any doubt upon the point that what they did was to make runs off balls that were just short of a good length, balls that less gifted (and keen-sighted) players were content to play, but which they trusted themselves so to deal with because of their sublime confidence in their eyesight and wrists and timing.

A good length to them was still a good length, but it was not that ball they scored off so regularly as was written at the time.

For all their brilliancy they were too sound, *and would never have made the runs they did* had they repeatedly taken risks with the true good length ball.

I refer here purposely to this matter of playing back and "chancing" the good length ball because young players are all too ready to play across the straight ball in any event. All attempts *to score off* good length bowling by playing back mean, necessarily, across-the-flight strokes. No young player is strong enough physically to play back and force runs straight back along the line of the advancing ball. As he cannot do this, and it is unsound and therefore unsafe, for him to try to score by hitting across the flight, he had better leave this stroke alone. It is because the young try it much too often—as the score-book reveals—that I write about it here to condemn its practice.

The best uses of Back Play are shewn in my chapters on the Hook, the Cut and the Leg-Glance to which I refer the reader.

When he has grown up and has played about ten seasons in first-class cricket a cricketer may begin to attempt playing Back and forcing fours past coverpoint but before that he is guilty of a rash and negligent act whenever he attempts any such antics. His downfall is his own fault, and neither Wicket, Bowler, nor Bad Luck is blameworthy therefor.

CHAPTER IX.

BOWLING.

WHAT IS BOWLING?

It is the art of getting wickets *in the quickest time possible*.

The shorter the time it takes to get wickets the fewer runs scored.

Set your field (1) according to the Batsman; (2) according to the State of the Wicket; (3) according to the State of the Score; and

BOWL ACCORDINGLY.

Bowling does not consist of delivering six balls per over, and retiring to second slip or short-leg for a quiet sleep. Bowling requires, if anything, more thought than batting.

Remember *always*, it is the Bowler who calls the tune, and who, therefore, orders the play.

A Batsman cannot score quickly, or slowly, or hit fours, without the Bowler's direct help. Here and there a Batsman hits a few fours in spite of the Bowler but MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF THE SCORING IS DUE TO BAD BOWLING, OR TO AVOIDABLE ERRORS IN BOWLING.

Most Bad Bowling is due to lack of command of the ball, which in itself is the result of Bad Teaching and of Lack of Practice when the player is young.

While it is undeniable that the genius in Bowling, like Rhodes, is born, not made, it is equally beyond dispute that any young cricketer with anything of a gift, or keenness, for Bowling can improve and become first-class—between which and the Rhodes class is an almost unbridgable gulf—by dint of downright hard work in the shape of intelligent practice. Not the dull disheartening practice of bowling to indifferent batsmen at the nets, but, preferably in the privacy of your own garden, on a wicket specially marked out with white lines to show the most vital target of all, *viz*:—the Good Length area, and where off-breaks and leg-breaks must pitch to be deadly.

That very great bowler, the late A. E. Trott (Australia and Middlesex), learned to bowl the true off-break, the one *that gets wickets*, by putting a box up in front of the stumps and pitching the ball to miss the box but to hit the stumps. The young Indian bowler may never have tried this road to perfection?

Bowl differently to each successive batsman since scarcely any two batsmen bat alike.

Change from over the wicket to round the wicket even twice in the same over if necessary. This is quite legitimate, and is *not a waste of time* EXCEPT THAT IT SHOULD NEVER BE DONE WHEN THE OPPOSING SIDE IS TRYING TO MAKE RUNS IN FOURTH INNINGS AGAINST TIME.

If a "sticker," or stodgy batsman is in and apparently not removable it is perfectly legitimate to bowl slow, or fast, full tosses in the direction of his head. If he gets hurt the fault is his. Before doing so, the field must be placed, without his knowing it, to catch the miss-hit close on the leg-side, or the good hit near the square-leg boundary. This is a very old and frequently used bowling trick, and the only thing due to the batsman who gets hurt in countering it is laughter. Those who mind getting hurt should give up Cricket.

Between the overs think out your plan of attack for the next over. Make a habit of doing this.

Bluff is a potent factor. If you are a slow to medium bowler make a fuss about placing your Outfielders when a known Hitter comes in. Then, having stopped in your run to wave extra coverpoint back a few yards begin your run all over again and bowl the fastest yorker or over-pitched half-volley of which you are capable. All such ruses are absolutely legitimate.

Always, *without exception*, pitch the ball well up—half volleys are "good length" in this case—to every new-comer.

With which Golden Rule of Bowling I proceed to particularise.

CHAPTER X.

BOWLING GRIPS.

For the plain straight ball of good length, the bowling of which all young bowlers must master before proceeding out of their depth to the bowling of the Breaks, the Googlie, and Changes of Pace, the best grip of all is with the first and second fingers on each side of the line of the inside stitching (not the seam) of the ball, and the thumb and first and second joints of the third finger underneath the ball. Keep on bowling this ball, without turning the wrist, or fingers, to the right or to the left at the instant of release, until you can pitch it where you want to pitch it. This will take years of practice, but that fact should encourage not dishearten, since, during those years, the bowler will get many good Batsmen out with this ball alone, provided he pitches it a good length.

All batsmen are vulnerable to Good Length, which gets more wickets than anything else in the long run.

OFF-BREAK.

The Grip for the Off-Break is to hold the ball in the left hand with the Seam vertical; then, turn it into the upper palm and fingers of the right hand so that the first finger of that hand can stretch right across the Seam; the remainder of the ball resting between the thumb and second and third fingers. At the instant of release turn the ball sharply from left to right by a combination of the wrist and the fingers, especially the first finger. This will give the ball the true Off-Break rotary spin from left to right.

LEG-BREAK.

The Grip for the Leg-Break is practically just the opposite to that for the Off-Break though, in this case, there is no one finger "wound round" any part of the ball as is the case with the first finger for the Off-Break. For the Leg-Break the ball is placed in a sort of cup formed by the first, second, and third fingers *underneath*,

with the thumb on top to wedge the ball into the cup. At the instant of release the ball is turned over from the right to the left by a combination of elbow, and wrist turn and finger-flip. It is the sudden raising of the elbow—which never occurs in the case of the Off-Break—which gives away the secret to the batsman that a Leg-Break has been bowled.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SWERVE.

The Grip for the swerve-away to the off is the simplest of all. The Swerve is the easiest of all balls to bowl while the ball is new. HENCE ITS POPULARITY, AND THE GENERAL FALLING-OFF IN BOWLING DEADLINESS THE WORLD OVER.

Would-be Swervers forget that though it is quite easy to bowl the Swerve it is very difficult indeed to pitch a swerving ball where it will be dangerous to the batsman. The result is that while all can swerve the ball few can pitch the Swerve so that it matters. Hence the neglect of all the other bowling arts and the great increase in cheap rungetting. I mention the Grip for the Swerve here only because it is right that all bowlers should be able to bowl the Swerve. It is nothing like the deadly ball it is popularly said, and written, to be, but that is largely because its constant use has withered and its custom has staled its danger.

The Swerve-Grip most in use is when the ball is held in the left hand with the Seam vertical. Then, the first and second finger of the right hand are placed one on either side of the Seam. The ball is then bowled *with the Seam still vertical* and is released *without any twist* from right to left, or *vice versa*, but is simply allowed to roll out of the Grip, the two fingers being the last part of the hand to touch the ball.

A ball so delivered, if properly let go, will always swerve from right to left. Especially and more so, if there is a wind blowing from the Long Leg quarter.

To make the ball Swerve from left to right *with this grip* is not so easy, and requires the unpleasant habit of the bowler licking the two top joints of the *second* finger before gripping the ball. This causes the second finger to *slip* at the instant of delivery thus making the first finger impart a right-to-left rotary spin to the ball. This—particularly if the wind is blowing from third man—will inevitably cause the ball to swing “in”, from left to right, on to the batsman. This trick was learned from Baseball pitchers.

Another way to impart the same two Swerves to the ball is to grip it, respectively, as for the Off and Leg-Breaks, described above, and at the time of delivery cause the palm of the hand to face skywards. This action alters the axis of spin, which for the Off-Break or Leg-Break was parallel to the ground, to perpendicular to the ground. Balls so spun cannot fail to swerve outwards (with the Off-Break spin on an altered axis), or inwards (with the Leg-Break spin on a perpendicular axis).

I satisfied myself as to this thirty years ago on the exposed ground of the Kolar Gold Fields, Mysore Province, where there is nearly always a wind blowing, and that, owing to the treeless area of a *maidan* at the top of a slope, a lateral wind.

Diagram 9 shows the reason why balls so held

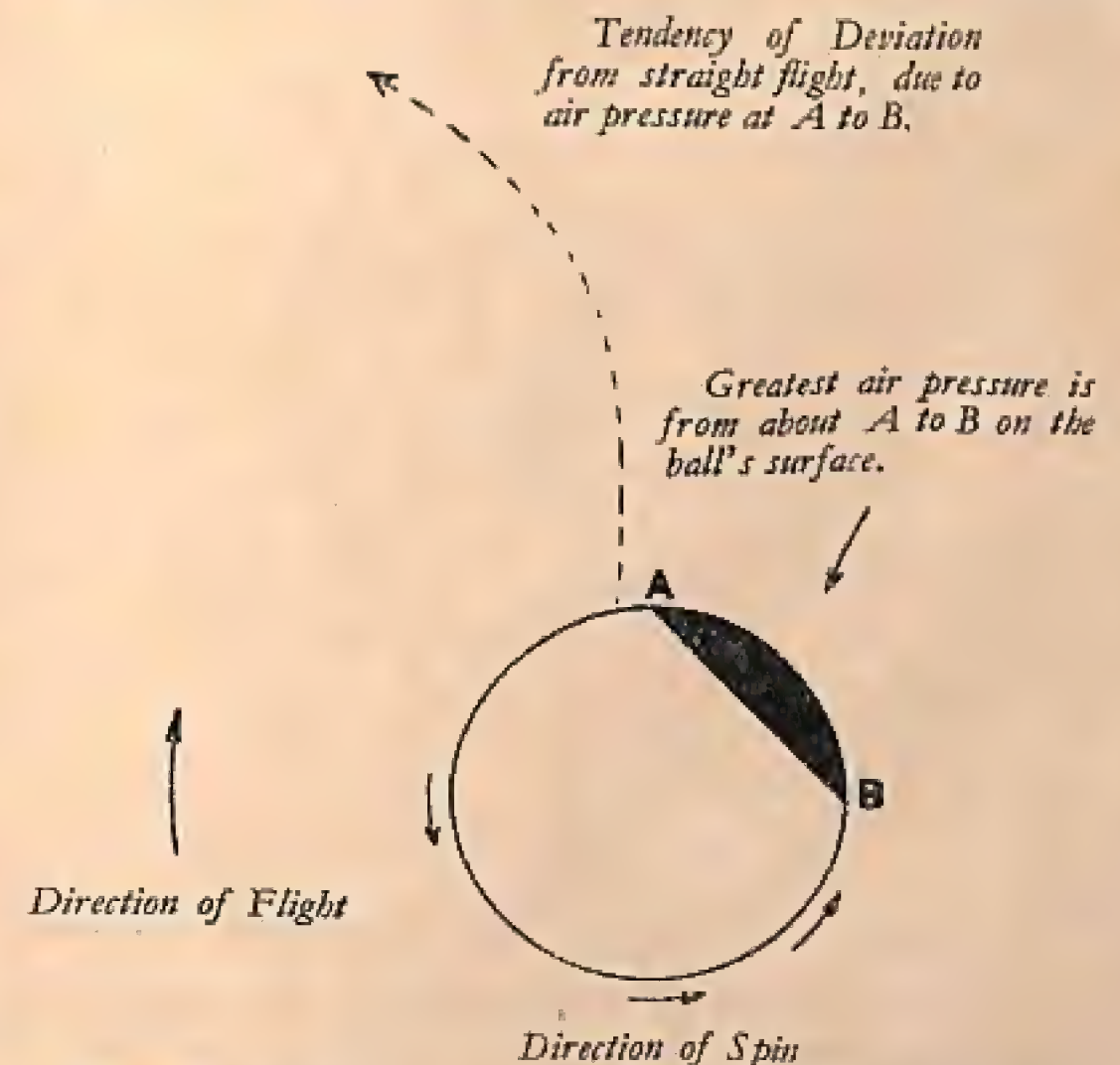


Diagram 9:—The “Away” Swerve obtained by Off-Break Spin bowled with a perpendicular Axis.

and bowled must deviate from the straight line. The clever bowler has only to practise to harness one of the forces of Nature to his own use; and the only reason I can suggest why so few bowlers in first-class cricket use this method is because so many are so lazy. The late A. E. Trott, R. T. Crawford and J. B. King of Philadelphia, the best right-handed in-swinger who ever bowled a ball, all used this spin. Whose solitary exponent now is Root of Worcestershire. Barnes of Lancashire and Staffs, took, and takes, scores of wickets with the in-swinger bowled this way.

I have to explain one more Grip before going on to other matters pertaining to the dismissal of well meaning and quite friendly people who want to make runs. This Grip is the one for Change of Pace.

Its chief recommendation—surely a sufficing one—was that its inventor and chief exponent was the late, and great, F. R. Spofforth.

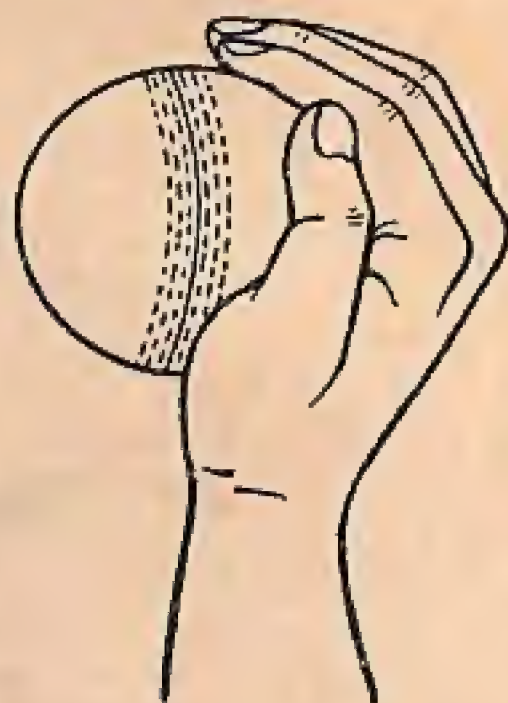


Diagram 10:—Grip for Change of Pace from fast to slow.

You take the ball in the left hand, Seam perpendicular, and Grip *only the right half* of the ball with the thumb and first three fingers of the right hand. Virtually, you bowl half the ball. The bowling hand slips forward

off the ball, to which it actually imparts a sufficient Off-Break to cause the ball to break if the pitch is responsive. This ball is bowled with the same action and speed of the previous deliveries, but, inasmuch as the whole of the ball does not receive the bowler's impetus, it does not travel so fast as the action of the delivery would appear to have sent it. Accurately bowled this is a very deceptive ball, and it has the additional great advantage over the more ordinary method of change of pace from fast to slow—*i.e.*, by slowing down arm action at the eleventh hour—of there being no real need to alter the arm action at all. But if it is altered it is, if anything, speeded up, which in itself is an advantage when the Bowler is trying to make the Batsman think he has bowled a faster ball than he really has. The diagram, here shewn, gives the grip required. It is much easier to bowl a faster ball than usual without revealing the change of pace than it is to bowl a slower ball than usual. Consequently, this Grip is invaluable and should be constantly practised by young bowlers and those not too old—or too proud!—to learn.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DELIVERY.

The young of the human species are imitative. I use this fact here by giving three "action" photographs of Test match bowlers in the act of delivering the ball. No young bowler will do his cricket any harm if he develops his own bowling action as nearly as he can along the lines of the delivery of Tate, here seen sideways and from almost in front; and of the splendid Finish of that great medium slow bowler, Relf (A.E.).

J. C. White and Tate personify the Edgewise Delivery WHICH IS THE BEST OF ALL STYLES.

Relf's follow-through with the arm and body is ideal.

If I had any youngsters to coach they'd have to learn to do it the White-Tate-Relf way—or give up bowling.

Unfortunately for the game there has arisen a style of bowling during the last fifteen years which has been distinguished by its consistent failure to last more than a season or two. This style is recognisable by two features: (1) the bowler bowls when he is very nearly chest square to the batsman, (2) the swing of his bowling arm is always in front of his stomach, his hand never starting its swing from somewhere behind the right buttock. The style is devoid of body swing and therefore lacks one of the chief essentials of Bowling.

N.B.—All the great bowlers of the Past bowled Edgewise. Very few bowlers of the last ten years bowl Edgewise.

Those who do, *e.g.*, Tate, Parker, Macdonald, Larwood, Rhodes, J. C. White and Freeman, have been the most consistently successful. Writing without the book I would back the aggregate of wickets of the seven bowlers I have mentioned against those of *any other ten* bowlers since the War.

All that follows about bowling in this book takes for granted an Edgewise delivery. The other kind is not Bowling, and it is consequently a waste of time to write for it.



Tate (Sussex & England) Chest square to mid-on. (See page 38.)



*The perfect finish of the delivery of Relf (A.E.) (Sussex & England).
(See page 38.)*

CHAPTER XIII.

FAST BOWLING.

The first three things a Fast Bowler should study are (1) a sensibly long run (not less than off the 13th step is about right) run at a good speed; (2) Good Length, *i.e.*, between $5\frac{1}{2}$ and $7\frac{1}{2}$ yards from the stumps; (3) a good Yorker. No fast bowler is fully equipped without these three things.

The advice now being copiously given at coaching classes in England, in articles in the Press and in books, that fast bowlers do not need and should not take a long run is absolutely harmful to the game. A long run is very necessary to a genuine fast bowler. Those who do not take a long run have only arm and body swing to rely upon and none of them, except E. Jones of Australia, was really fast. By comparison with him and C. J. Kortright such a bowler as W. Brearley (Cheshire and Lancashire) was merely medium pace. I never found him faster than medium fast, and he was one of the six or seven strides and only arm-swing type.

There is twice the "fire," and "devil" in the bowling of a fast bowler who takes a long run than there can possibly be in that of a short-run bowler trying to overcome the lack of a long run by exaggerated (and consequently unnecessarily tiring) body and arm contortions.

Having carefully studied the comfortable length of run best suited to himself the bowler must then practise *incessantly* at pitching a straight length. The best ball of the fast bowler pitches on and very near the line of the off-stump. A good fast bowler can pitch this one *at will*.

Having mastered this ball the next item is that very deadly ball the fast Yorker. This ball has won many a match—and will do so again. The way to bowl it is to concentrate upon bowling *at the bails*. Aim at them and the ball will pitch just on or over the Popping Crease. That is where the true Yorker pitches. Anything pitching short of, or outside, the Popping Crease is not

A-67/92

a Yorker, and is easily played. Any ball pitching beyond the Popping Crease by a foot at least is a full toss, and is much more easy to play than is a Yorker.

THE FAST YORKER HAS BEEN SINCE THE BEGINNING OF CRICKET THE BEST BALL OF ALL TO BOWL TO A NEW BATSMAN.

Consequently, the bowler who has command of the ball to such an extent that he can bowl a true fast Yorker once in four attempts is a great asset to any side. He is as good as two wickets *taken* in every innings. Better even than that if he can pitch the Yorker on the line of the leg-stump.

Having studied Good Length, Direction on the Off-Stump and the Yorker, and bowled little else for some years, it is time for the young fast bowler to learn how to pitch the Off-Break *without loss of pace or direction*. There is no secret about How to Do this. It can be acquired only by incessant practice. The grip for the off-break must be used, and if the bowler makes full use of *the length of the Bowling Crease* and brings his right foot down as near the Return Crease as he can without touching it, and also bowls with a true Edgewise Delivery—this is most important—he will find that a ball pitching outside the off-stump at a good length will go on and hit the leg stump whether the ball has turned from the off or not on pitching.

The Angle of Delivery matters a great deal. It is a very good policy to alter the Place of Despatch during every over.

Bowl one ball from as near the stumps as possible; the next from as near the return crease as possible; the third from halfway between the two; the fourth from the same place as the second; the fifth from a yard *short* of the Bowling Crease and bowl this one a little slower; the sixth from where the first was bowled. That is a good "mixed" over.

A glance at Diagram 11 shows what the Batsman has to contend with against such a varied Attack.

Take the two plain straight deliveries A. and B. Both of these are presumed in the Diagram to pitch on

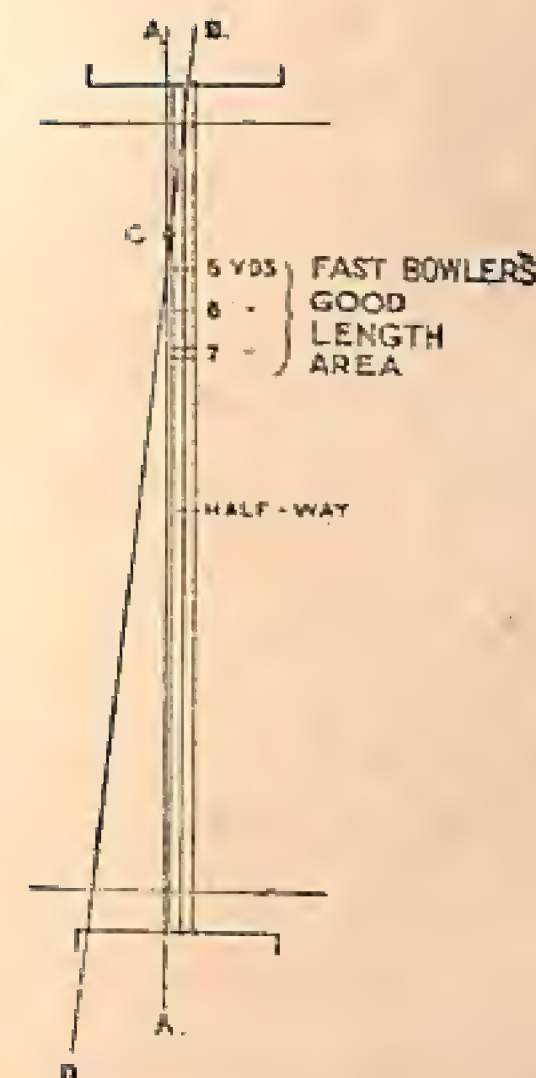


Diagram 11:—*The Angle of Delivery. See text.*

the same spot C. Yet B. would hit the leg and middle stumps and A. would miss the off-stump by a couple of inches. A Batsman needs to be super-alert to cope successfully for long against such an Attack. This, however, is only a case of a Straight Ball Attack. What if ball A. is an off-break in the first instance and plain straight, or go-away-swerve, in the second and third instances? The difficulty of the Batsman would be then trebled.

And if B. is a good off-break it will be difficult to play it off the ribs without giving mid-on or short-leg a chance.

It is all to the good that both A. and B. are slightly beyond the true Good Length because that means that the batsman must "come out at" them and be tempted to force. Especially in the case of A. he will be inclined

to play inside the ball if, as it should be, A. is bowled directly after B. and is pitched truly on or about C.

This Diagram 11 applies not only to fast bowling but to slow-medium and slow as well. A study of this Diagram, as well as the student drawing more elaborate Diagrams for himself, will prove most instructive, apart from what such labours prove to an intelligent worker about the uses of the Angles of Delivery.

Diagram 12 shows the correct set of the field for fast or for fast-medium bowling. I am convinced after many years experience that the usual "set" of three



Diagram 12 :—Field set for Fast or Fast-medium bowling.

slips and a "gully" is inadvisable. Most of the time third-slip might just as well be in the pavilion. It is freely admitted that now and again he drops a catch or fails to save runs thus proving that the ball sometimes goes in his direction. But in the long run, and especially in Club, Gymkhana and Quadrangular Cricket, it will be found to pay better if there are the usual two

slips (further apart by *one* yard than they are usually placed) and two, instead of one at "gully." Very few snicks go between second slip and Right gully as stationed in my Diagram but lots of catches and fielding opportunities go a-begging on either side of an ordinary "gully" who, ever since A. O. Jones invented the position (though I fielded in it frequently in the year 1890, and got blamed for a fool for my temerity!) has had to do the work of two men. A. O. Jones was captain of Bedford Modern School in 1890 and often kept wicket in those days (as, later on, he did for England in a Test match at the Oval in 1905); when I fielded in the "gully" I was captain of Bedford School in the same year. I am unlikely to forget it, as the Notts and England professional, Flowers, made 93 against us for M.C.C. that year, among his runs being a cut which sent the ball *between* my left hand and my face. I can hear its whizz still!

Most fast bowlers must expect their captain to object to the double-slip double-gully solution of the slips problem simply because "it is not done." Nevertheless, try it, and persevere with it, is my deliberate counsel.

Final hints to a fast bowler are as follow. Avoid the weak *modern* practice of "bumping 'em down" and trusting to snicks being held anywhere behind the wicket. That is not Bowling, but a waste of time.

The thing to do is *to bowl the batsman out*, and let the Snicks come when they may. Slight, very slight, changes of pace; yorkers; changes in points of despatch thus varying the angle of delivery; an occasional full pitch at the top of the stumps bowled on purpose; and ceaseless, *tireless*, energy are the chief weapons in the true fast bowler's armoury.

The true Fast Bowler is "never tired."

It is downright cowardice to ask to be taken off, whether after five or six or after twenty consecutive overs. There is no reason why, even in India, a fast bowler should not bowl fifteen overs without being changed. If he is not physically fit to last the delivery of 90 balls he is not fit to play in decent class cricket, probably because

he has not taken the trouble to take care of his physical condition off the field *for the good of his own side*. Half the things one reads about the need for "nursing" fast bowlers and the impossibility (what a word for a cricketer to use) of a fast bowler lasting unless he is given frequent rests is effeminate advice, a form of degeneracy, which any man or boy should scorn to listen to. The grand edifice of Cricket was not built upon such milk and watery foundations.



D. J. Knight (Malvern, Oxford, Surrey & England) running in to drive.
(See page 6.)



J. C. White. The true "edgewise" style. (See page 38.)

CHAPTER XIV.

MEDIUM AND SLOW BOWLING.

The rules for one kind of Bowling whether right or left hand are, in the main, the same for all kinds. But



Diagram 13 :—*Field set for medium paced right hand bowling.*

there are certain differences which must be observed. For one thing whereas slow and medium paced Bowlers should depend a good deal upon what is known as *Flighting the Ball* for success, a Fast Bowler cannot have a similar dependency because his is such a speedy affair that there is practically no such thing in his case as "beating his man in the air;" which is what happens when a Slow Bowler so deceives the Batsman in the flight of the ball as to cause him to make up his mind finally—and wrongly—while the ball is in the air. All the other rules about change of pace, alteration of Angle as well as of the Distance of the delivery, yorker bowling, and so on hold good for all bowling. The slower paced bowlers have one more field in which to slay their victim than has the Fast Bowler, and that is the

Outfield. It is one of the cleverest things a slow bowler can do to entice a batsman into miss-hitting a ball well within reach of a wisely placed Long-on or Long-off, and one of the best ways of doing this is to Flight the Ball so that the resultant hit must be a false one.

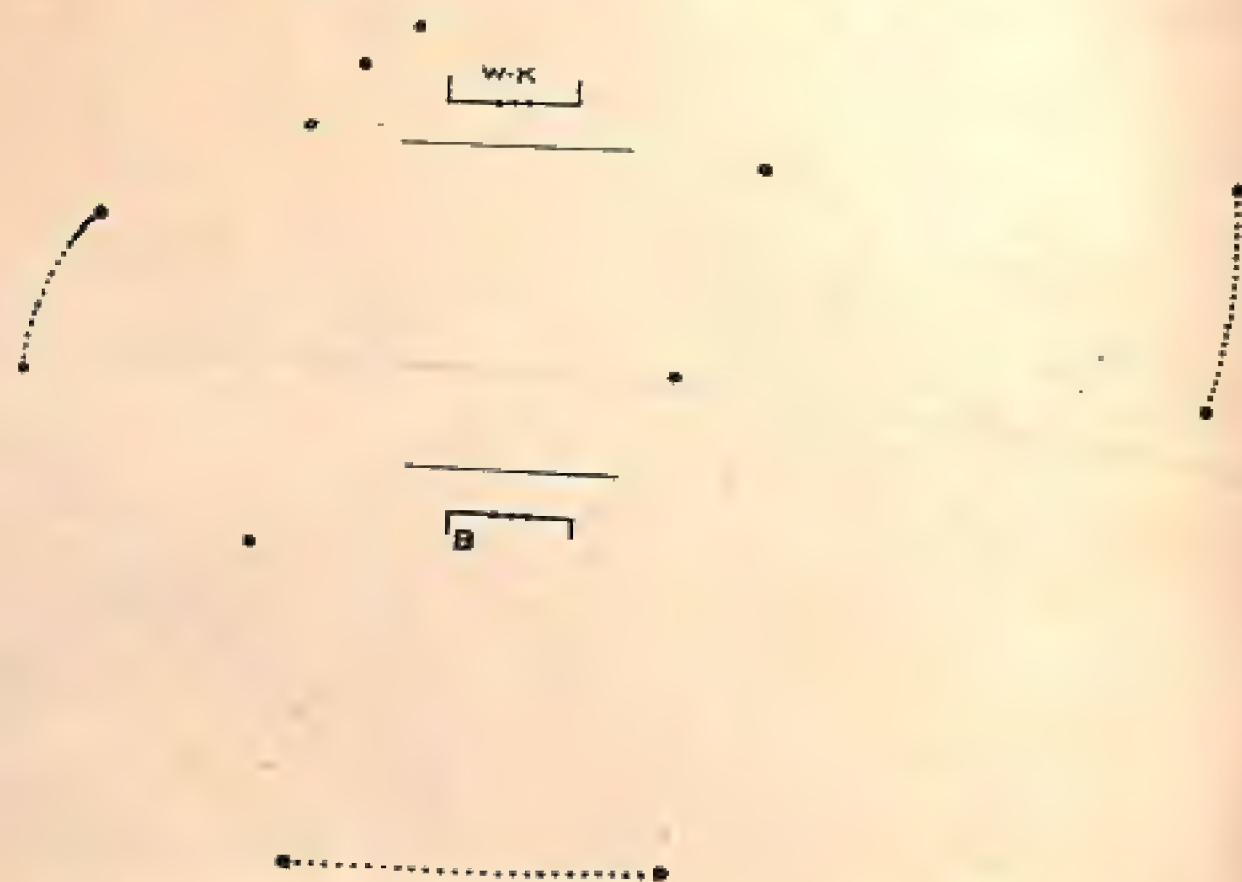


Diagram 14:—Field set for a slow left-hand bowler.

Flighting is done largely, if not entirely by changes of pace and in this branch of bowling the Half-Ball Grip shown above is invaluable. Briefly put, the object of Flighting is to make the Batsman mistake the Length, or Pitch, of the ball. This is best achieved by slightly tossing it at the bowler's end, or the start of its flight. See Diagram 15. The obvious result of this if it is successfully done, is to cause the Batsman to imagine the ball is pitching closer to him than it really will. He is consequently apt to mistake a Good Length for a Half Volley and to make up his mind to hit where he ought to play the ball defensively. Such balls well bowled are very productive of "stumped" and "c. and b." chances. To elucidate the Flighting Diagram let me explain that A. is the ordinary straight medium paced ball pitching just about the off-stump a good length.

Its rise from the pitch is in a fairly straight line and the Batsman meets, and defeats, it and its possible break with the plain straight Forward Stroke that will smother the break before it can get past the bat. B. is a ball bowled from exactly the same place, but it is tossed slightly at the start, the Bowler's intention being nevertheless to cause it to pitch at C. where A. pitched. It is necessary that B. should be a slower ball than A. but the lesser speed must be so imperceptible that the Batsman does not detect it until too late to change his stroke. The natural result of B. being slower than A. is that B. will bounce more than A., and therefore the line CB' will be a more curved one than the line CA'. This means either that the Batsman will hit B. somewhere up in the air or, missing it altogether, as the curve takes it over the shoulder of his bat he will give a chance of stumping unless he has kept his right foot firmly down within—not "on"—the Popping Crease. "On" that crease is "Out."

This Flighting is very difficult of accomplishment. It belongs to the Higher Cricket, but once a young player has begun to master Length and general Command of the Ball which means that he is able to pitch it reasonably well where he wants to pitch it there is no reason why he should not study it, and every reason why he should. In the foregoing remarks, and Diagram 15, I have not by any means exhausted the subject of Flighting but have given the chief method. Flighting is included in the different kinds of Swerves already referred to, all of them bowled with deceptive intent. For such is the Bowler's task in life—to deceive, always to deceive!

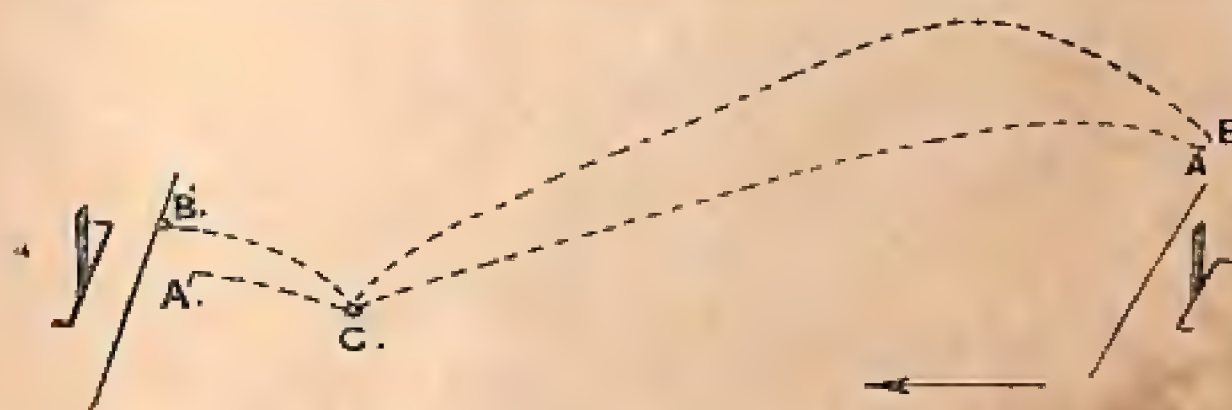


Diagram 15:—Flighting the Ball.

CHAPTER XV. THE GOOGLIE.

It is a lasting reproach to Indian cricket that so far it has failed to produce a really good "googlie" bowler, even if it can boast one at all. In the loose cricket literature of the day, so much of which is inaccurate, any kind of slow bowling but especially right-handed slow leg-break bowling is described as "googlie" bowling. That is damaging to cricket as a game and unfair to Batsmen. It is one thing to bowl and to be bowled out by an ordinary Leg-Break, but it is quite another to be able to bowl a "googlie" at all.

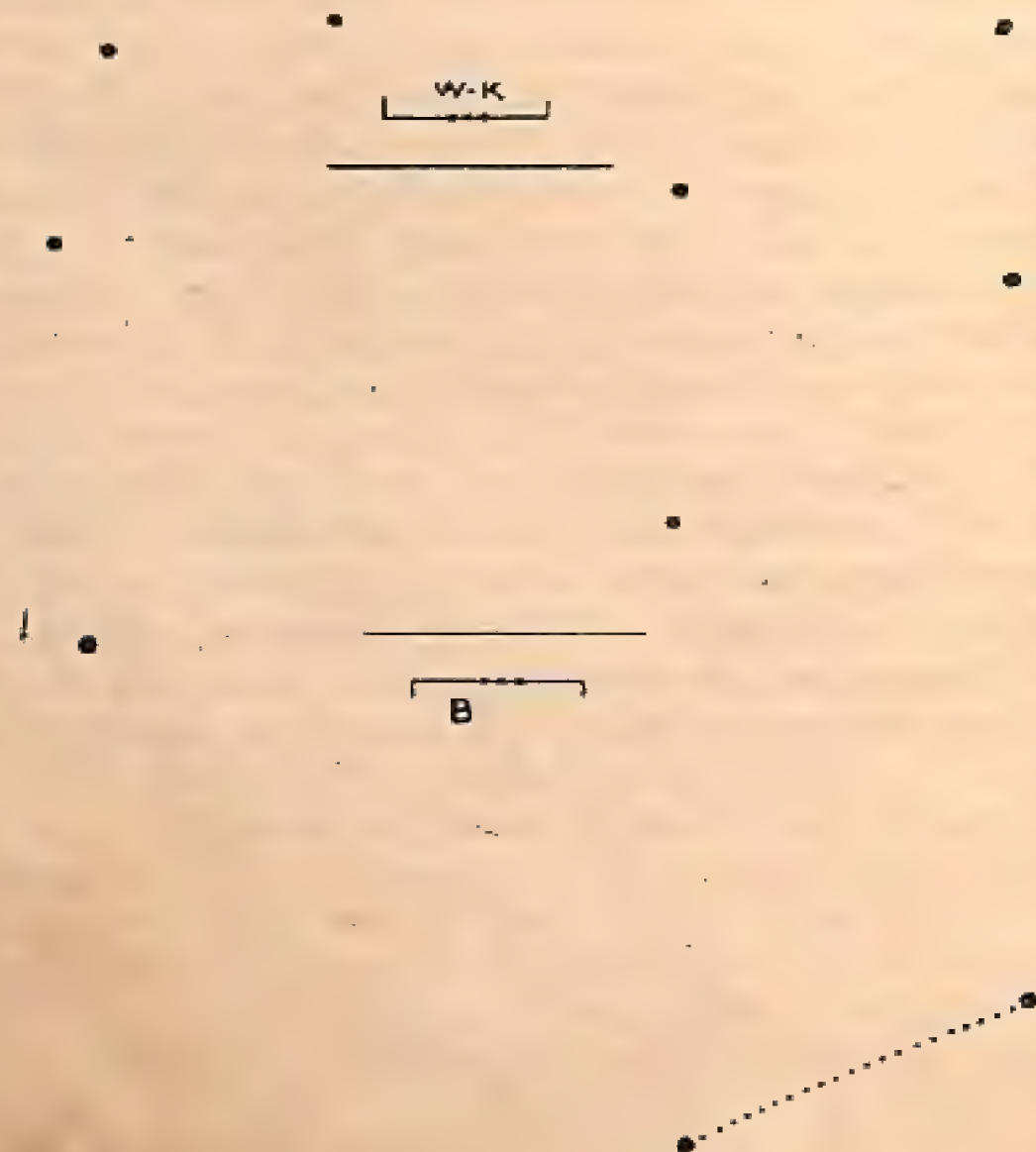


Diagram 15A :—Field set for "Googlie" Bowler.

The word itself needs some explanation. In the year 1900 the Etonian-Oxonian-Middlesex fast bowler, B. J. T. Bosanquet (who was Bozangki to the London crowd and "Bose" to his intimates) found when he was flicking a billiard ball about a table with his fingers that he could so twist his wrist from right to left and his fingers from left to right at the instant of release that the ball, spinning from left to right, "borrowed" bias from the cloth and of course "worked" from left to right in its progress up the table. Here was the Off-Break change of direction propelled with an apparently Leg-Break action of delivery. So he proceeded on to the lawn with a tennis-ball and a "fag" of some kind to chuck the ball back—and Lo! the "Googlie" was born after a mixed parturition in billiard-room and on lawn.

At the time Bosanquet was a fastish right-hander of sorts, to-day he would be voted as good as Larwood or Tate as a fast bowler. When he first persuaded the late Gregor Macgregor, captain of Middlesex, to let him try this new ammunition I do not know, but I do know that the first "googlie" I ever saw was bowled by Bosanquet to the late A. P. Lucas—one of the best cutters Cricket ever knew—at Leyton in 1901. "Bunny" Lucas shaped for a cut four, the ball however (which while in the air looked very like four runs) "came back," and Lucas's bat only just got there in time.

During its infant stages in county cricket the "googlie" pitched or bounced sometimes three sometimes four times. Ever and anon second slip, or point, fielded it and the umpire had no need to signal:—"Wide!" All this time this new ammunition had not been to the front, nobody had christened it.

Then, soon recognising its deadly qualities if and when properly bowled, in which circumstances:—

IT IS THE MOST DESTRUCTIVE BALL IN CRICKET AND ALWAYS HAS BEEN SO,

they sent its inventor to Australia, wherein, among the two and three bouncers, he found time to win a Test outright with the new weapon. The quick brain of the cricket educated public of Australia thereupon set about finding a name for this ball.

At first it was the "Bosie" ball, but that was banal, too *vin ordinaire*. Then, a thought struck somebody—he is unhonoured and unsung to this day—and the magic word:—"Googlie" was born. It is a quite meaningless and unintelligible word, and its object is worthy of something much more to the point. But there it is, it came into usage 27 years ago and is with us apparently for ever.

The South Africans did not think the word suited, so they preferred and proffered a much better one. They styled it the "Wrong 'Un," but the term never stuck; no doubt out of respect to the game of Cricket which never had the least use for wrong 'uns of any description. So we are left with the Australian word which is now almost part of the English language.

The "googlie" is either an Off-Break delivered with a Leg-Break action, or it is a Leg-Break delivered with Off-Break action, as a left-handed bowler could deliver it.

The first right-hander who can bowl a Leg-Break with an Off-Break action is going to cut quite a lot of ice. Here is a field for the ingenuity of some young Indian with flippy fingers and wrists and plenty of time on his hands.

Each bowler must discover for himself the way *which suits him best* for bowling a "googlie." There is no *one* Grip for this ball. The late R. O. Schwarz, (St. Paul's, London, Middlesex County, and South Africa), who bowled the quickest as well as the biggest Off-Break *ever seen* in cricket, bowled it with a Leg-Break action after gripping the ball with the thumb and first and second fingers pressing the ball against the *second* joint of his *third* finger. Whenever I essayed the "googlie" *à la* Schwarz the ball either refused to leave my hand or went with irritating inconsequence towards short-leg or point, as it seemed to will. So I tried my own way, which held the ball more or less lightly between the thumb and first three fingers and at the instant of release with a Leg-Break action the thumb alone gave the ball Off-Break spin. I deceived quite a number of men in full possession of all their faculties and many of

them with a presentable batting average to boot, before *Anno Domini* and the increasing distance of the Earth from my outstretched fingers compelled me to retire from such deceptive pursuits.

Any youngster can learn how to bowl the "googlie" if he has any aptitude for slow bowling with spin from leg. It is not so easy for Off-Break bowlers pure and simple.

The chief drawback of "googlie" bowling is that it means so many gaps in the set of the field that a class batsman has only to refuse to be tempted to score off the good balls to be sure of runs off the bad ones. This "solution" was arrived at at once in 1907, when England was first invaded by such a set of "googlie" bowlers as it had never beheld before and has not seen since. The best brain that ever played first-class cricket regularly—that of C. B. Fry—solved the puzzle straight away. Except Hobbs, who is the best player of "googlies" yet seen, nobody played them so successfully as Fry.

He did so by stopping, or ignoring, everything doubtful, and going for singles and twos only off the other ones. Unless of course it was a really bad length one when it received the Clout Proper on a Field Vert under a sky more or less Azure.

CHAPTER XVI

WICKET-KEEPING.

I am confident that I cannot begin my Chapter on wicket-keeping better than by giving the hints so kindly sent to me by such a very well-known and accomplished wicket-watcher as Mr. C. B. Rubie, who has had over twenty years' experience of active participation in the game in India and Ceylon. As I have never kept wicket in anger and only three times in fun I asked him for some practical hints, knowing how my readers in India will respect what he has to say. This is what he wrote :—

“Although in the past many articles have been written on the art of wicket-keeping, and, further, as there are undoubtedly certain set rules that should be followed, it is always extremely hard to give more than a general guide, as nearly all wicket-keepers have different styles of their own.

There are certain things that must be adhered to, and these are as follows :—

- (1) The finger tips should be an inch to two inches from the ground when in position.
- (2) The body should be balanced evenly on both feet.
- (3) The hands plus gloves should be treated as a cup, and on no account should a ball be taken with the fingers pointing to the bowler's wicket. The fingers when taking a ball *should always be pointing to the bottom of the stumps in front of the wicketkeeper*. If this, the correct way, is not done the stumper will be ‘hors de combat’ in a very few overs.
- (4) Always stand right up to the wicket, or right back. Never stand at ‘half cock,’ *i.e.*, 6 to 9 feet from the stumps.
- (5) Never snatch at the ball, always treat your hands as a cushioned cup, and let the ball ‘flop’ into the cup so made.

- (6) Don't use ‘gadgets’ such as plastercine, raw beef, or cotton wool, etc. Buy the best gauntlets (Quaife and Lilley's, E. J. Smith's) and use two, or three under gloves if necessary. Gadgets spoil the touch of the ball in the palm, and are ungainly. I've kept wicket for 25 years against all sorts of bowling and have had one dislocated thumb, which was my own fault.
- (7) Learn to be quick on the feet (they should be about 16 to 18 inches apart when ready to receive the ball) and always be on the balls of the feet when in the crouching position.
- (8) Watch the ball from the bowler's hand to the bat, and never take your eyes off it, or you will never take the ball on the leg side. Experience and anticipation play a big part in all work on the leg side of the wicket.
- (9) Although its often objectionable to your side and the opposing batsmen, practise stumping occasionally (even though the batsman is just in his ground), it insures quickness and precision.
- (10) Never take the ball with one hand. Some first-class stumpers do, but its done more for effect than usefulness.
- (11) Stand back to fast bowling. The chances of a catch off fast bowling far outweigh all chances of stumping.

Summing up, good wicket-keepers are born and not made, although the above notes may help any budding ones.

Practice makes perfect, and a good wicket-keeper can generally be told by the condition of his hands after taking fast bowling. If he is a mediocre performer he will be seeing the chemist directly after the match is over.”

To which there is really very little to add. Item 3 is *most* important. All the top-class wicket-keepers do this; also Item 9. This latter practice generally annoys the man in the crowd whose side is being beaten, which is a sure sign that it is a good practice.

Mr. Rubie has not mentioned two things which I have never failed to notice in all class wicket-keepers. One is that they all stand with their hands as near the

stumps as possible, their stance being generally slightly outside the off-stump; and one and all of them invariably chase the ball that goes for leg-byes or which is played for singles and twos on the leg-side. This chasing is very definitely the wicket-keeper's and not short-slip's or mid-on's duty. A wicket-keeper is one of the fielders and is not merely a receptacle for wides and balls which batsmen ought to have cut for four.

Whenever a ball is hit and the batsmen run, or attempt to do so the wicket-keeper must always move to place the wicket between himself and the probable line of return of the ball from the field.

A wicket-keeper must closely watch what the wicket, and the ball from *every* bowler, is "doing." He must do this quietly without ostentation and unless he knows his captain well enough to do so, without going to his captain to offer an opinion that was not sought. He must remember all that he has seen while thus taking mental notes, so that, when asked, he can give his captain the facts.

How useful a thoughtful wicket-keeper may be to his side was proved in a county match many years ago, before the ball was "Dead" after the umpire has called "over." During the smoking room chat on the second evening of the match the umpire from whose end the last over of the day had been bowled happened to remark to one of the fielding side, in the hearing of the wicket-keeper, that "Blank was plumb out l.-b.-w. to the last ball of the day. If any of you had asked I'd have given him 'Out!'" Brer Fox lay low, but next morning, before the first ball of the day was bowled, the wicket-keeper stepped aside and appealed to that umpire for l.-b.-w. against Blank for the last ball overnight! Blank had to go, too. They cannot do this now, as Law 50 prohibits an appeal "after any cessation of play."

Nobody may consider himself a wicket-keeper who does not return the ball as a catch to the bowler. The only exception to the rule:—"Always catches to the bowler" is when there is an evening sun behind the wicket-keeper, when the ball should be rolled along the ground; thus upholding one of the golden rules of the game:—"Always save your bowler."

CHAPTER XVII

CAPTAINCY.

Captains are not only born—they can be made.

They can be made by a constant and close study of the game; by "thinking Cricket" at times when there is no reason why you should not think Cricket; by studying the scores of big matches and reasoning for yourself what happened and how and why such and such a good batsman was got out so cheaply, and why a certain bowler was taken off or put on and so forth. The score-sheet of an important game is a most fertile field for discovery and for keeping one's knowledge of the game up to the mark, and improving it.

It used to be said that a Captain's chief duty is to win the toss. But I think a much more important one combines seeing that his team is a cheerful and happy one while at the same time making it play the game seriously.

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PLAY CRICKET PROPERLY UNLESS IT IS PLAYED SERIOUSLY AND IN A DIGNIFIED MANNER.

Let fooling at Cricket be confined to Charity and such matches. It is the Captain's chief job to play the game up to the hilt and according to its most precious unwritten laws without being too meticulous and exacting as to the letter of its written laws. For example, that appeal against Kumar Shri Duleepsinhji for changing his hands and attempting to hit, or actually hitting, an off ball through the slips during one of the Quadrangular matches of 1928 at Bombay was a most unwise, not to say childish, proceeding. The reason afterwards given in point that it is part of a Captain's duty to see to it that his men do not get hurt—though the reason was worded that he should not wait until somebody was hurt—only aggravated the injudiciousness of the appeal. No Captain has any right whatsoever to dictate his stroke to any Batsman who for his part has every right to play the ball with the bat in any way he chooses. The more such finicky appealing is condemned verbally and in

writing by people in, and with, authority the better for Cricket in India.

There is another matter deeply concerning Captaincy in Indian cricket which must be mentioned here. I allude to the much too frequent disputings of the umpire's decisions both vocally and by the actions of the disputer which occur every year as reported in the daily papers. It is the Captain's duty to repress every ebullition of this kind instantly and firmly. Even if it means the resignation or departure from the eleven of the disputer he must be well "sat upon" by his Captain. This should be done in private at first, but if the offender offends again then the more public and severe the reprimand the better.

He must be made to understand that
CRICKET IS A GENTLEMAN'S GAME FIRST, LAST, AND ALL THE TIME

and that if he cannot be a Sportsman and a Gentleman and take an umpire's bad decision with a smiling face and no malice then the sooner the cricket field sees him no more the better for it and its occupants.

Nowhere in the World of Cricket is there such a frequent disputing of Umpire's decisions as there is in India, judging only by the daily papers, as I must, since I play no longer. This was not so in my playing days out here, and as I have played on some 25 different grounds in India and Ceylon in my time I have some right to express an opinion. But since then, not always I fear for the good of the game, there has been a kind of mushroom growth of so-called "All India" tournaments, which are not All India tournaments, and Quadrangular tournaments. The competitive spirit thereby engendered has tended to get rather the better of some of the less intelligent competitors, whose vanity sometimes carries them away and makes them believe that it is really a very serious matter if they happen to be given out caught at the wicket when they haven't played the ball, or even whether they make a run or not. Should any Captain forget himself so far as to dispute the Umpire's decision himself then, of course, his deposition from a post he is so obviously unfit to occupy

should be but a matter of hours. Since a Captain cannot set too robust and clean an example to his men.

Assuming he has won the toss his first duty is to take first innings and write out his order-of-going-in which his men should understand from the start is "liable to alteration." The old custom of sending in a steady player with a quick scorer is by far the best, though there are occasions when it is just as well to send in two quick scorers. Nobody can say beforehand that both will either come off, or both fail, and should both come off the batting side is in clover at once, the path for succeeding batsmen being thus made so much clearer. There is no fixed rule, and in all probability a right and a left-hander as the first pair is the most effective scheme of all as should such a pair succeed then the bowling is in a tangle at once.

Remember, and never forget, that bowlers never bowl so well to a right-hander when there is a left-hander in with him. This has been proved to be the case too often for any doubt to exist in the matter. It is well worth while, therefore to send in even a moderate left-hander to help your side by helping your best right-hander to get a lot of indifferent bowling to score off.

I might observe here that there was a most remarkable illustration of this very theory last season. Kent began the season fairly well but fell off while Woolley had a run of low scores. Suddenly Woolley ran into form with four successive centuries, whereupon Hardinge, who had made very few runs previously, began to score centuries again, other members of the eleven also made a lot of runs and the Kent XI became a quite different proposition for the opposition.

The Captain should at any time he thinks fit alter his order and send in a hitter or a steady player instead of the original choice. The worst time to do this and to send in a steady player is in an endeavour to "stop the rot." That is the time to send in a hitter. Very few steady players have ever stopped a rot, or ever will. The best way is to hit the bowlers off their length. That done, the rest follows. If a hitter fails he fails gloriously,

and as a Briton should. There is something extremely depressing about the failure of a steady player. That only adds to the general gloom and fog in the dressing room. Which it is a Captain's duty to try to dispel.

Nothing but match-practice can teach a Captain anything very valuable about Tactics but a few hints are here permissible. A study of Diagram 16 will repay any captain. Runs against time can be prevented by this "set" of the field if one condition holds good and that is that all the bowlers faithfully carry out their captain's order and bowl straight, *i.e.*, every ball on the wicket well pitched

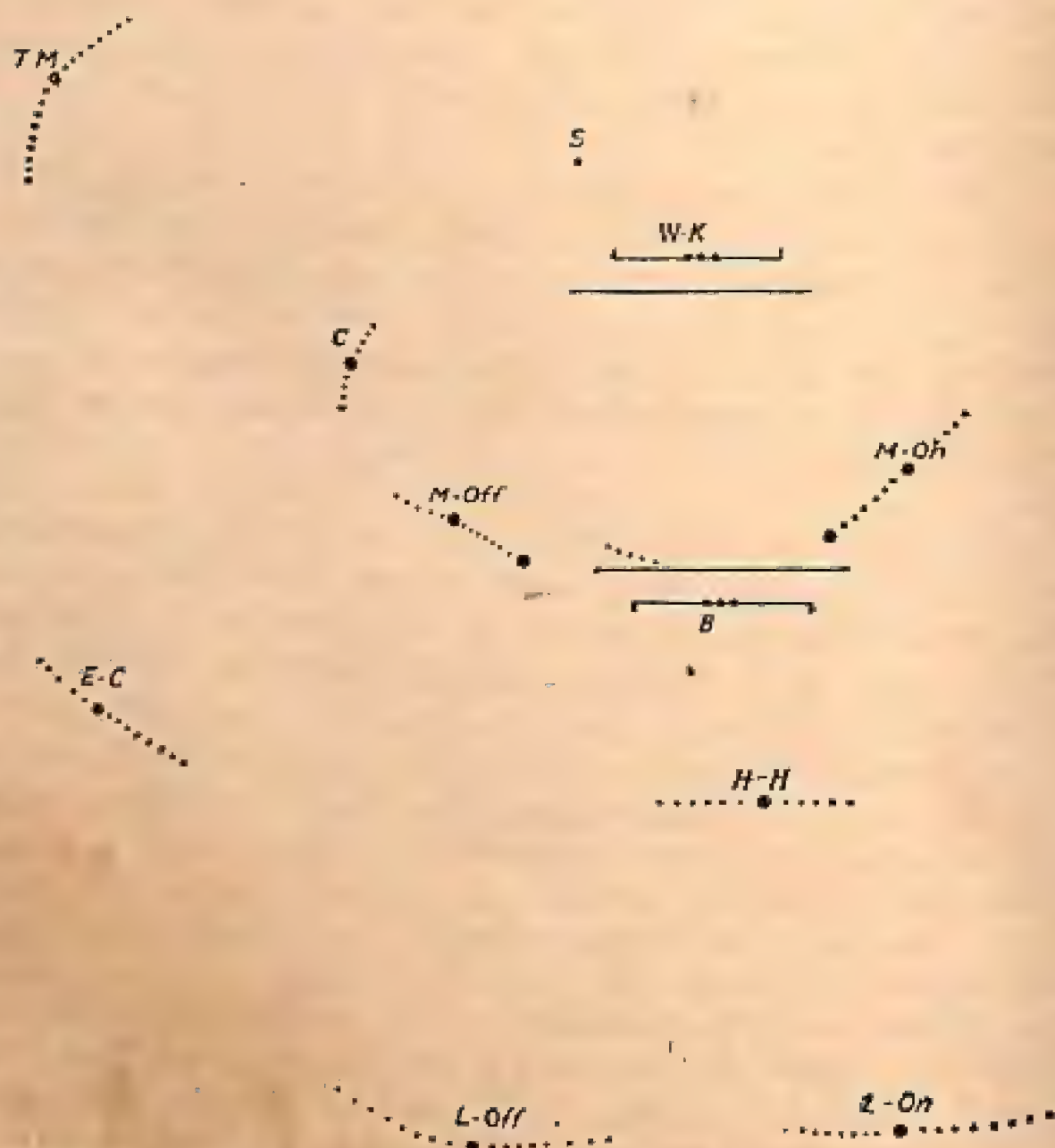


Diagram 16:—Set of Field to prevent putting runs against Time.

up and never short. The theory is, of course, that a straight ball can *only* be driven or hit straight back. Working on this theory your bowlers religiously bowl straight after having blocked every straight and semi-straight hit. Wherefore, the batsman who is there to get runs quickly is *compelled*, theoretically, to hit across the flight of the ball. Assuming that your bowlers *do* obey orders disaster is *the certain fate* of such a batsman unless he is a born Jessop.

It will be observed that the square-leg area is left blank. This is part of the whole scheme. Fours will be scored there for a certainty and the unwise bowler, and captain, will always be tempted to move a fielder there. If a batsman hits too many fours in that quarter the Half-Hit fielder, marked H-H. on the Diagram, should be moved to block the stroke and an occasional slower ball should be bowled purposely aiming at the batsman's left shoulder. He is quite likely then to try to hit such balls too carefully after seeing a man placed especially to stop or to catch this hit, and when a batsman who is forcing the pace against Time suddenly begins to play carefully he is particularly liable to make the mistake which matters.

If the field is set according to Diagram 16 and *the bowlers really do their duty* it will be a very exceptional batting side that beats the clock. The whole plot depends upon the accuracy of the attack and upon not moving the field about because a four has been scored through a gap.

A sure sign of a bad captain is the moving about of the field to places where runs have just been made. That is rank bad cricket wherever it is done at all regularly, and a certain sign that the bowler is uncertain of his own ability. No captain should encourage such a bad habit, or ever be guilty of it himself.

Captains must generally, not always, bow to the wishes of their bowlers as regards the placings of fieldsmen. After all, when changing a field a bowler may have some special reason for doing so, and should be presumed to have a good reason until he has himself proved otherwise.

It is sometimes good tactics to allow a single to be scored on purpose to get the weaker of the two batsmen opposite to the bowler then operating.

Captains must insist on all their fieldsmen always keeping an eye on both Captain and bowler so that a move of a few yards one way or the other can be effected by a silent movement of the hand. No shouting should be necessary. It never is *in a good team*.

Captains must keep a constant eye on their slips *who are nearly always two yards too deep*; and upon those fieldsmen who are known to be given to roaming from the place where they were stationed by the bowler. There is usually one such wanderer in every eleven.

In short, a Captain to captain properly must never rest. He must be a cheery and energetic soul always; and also a bit of an autocrat whose "Yes" means "Yes," and whose order is an order, and not a mumbling noise. He must be captain off the field as well as upon it and his chief job is to see to it, and to see that every one of his team thoroughly understands, that in a team

THERE IS ONLY ONE CAPTAIN.

CHAPTER XVIII.

UMPIRING.

The less written about "Umpiring" the better.

The more that is written (and legislated!) about Umpiring the more confusing and difficult does the never anything but very difficult job of an Umpire become.

I intend, therefore, purposely to be as brief as possible.

Good umpiring is based four square upon:—

- (1) the natural sense of fair play in the individual, which is by no means the same in all of us;
- (2) splendid eyesight;
- (3) keen hearing;
- (4) absolute fearlessness of any man born of woman.

Everything an Umpire does as regards the loss of his wicket by a batsman is the result of the Umpire's personal opinion, of which nobody can deprive him. We do not all read the same Law the same way, and if the Umpire's reading is not yours that is certainly no ground for assuming that yours is the right one. Even if yours was proved to be the right one, on a majority vote

IT IS YOUR DUTY AS A CRICKETER TO ACCEPT THE UMPIRE'S READING, AND CONSEQUENTLY HIS DECISION, WITHOUT DEMUR OF ANY KIND.

The first Law of Cricket ought to be revised to read:

THE UMPIRE'S DECISION IS FINAL, THERE CAN BE NO DISPUTING IT.

Disputing an Umpire's decision is, in the first place, an ungentlemanly act; secondly, it is childish, feminine, and most unmanly; thirdly, it is

NEVER DONE BY TRUE CRICKETERS.

It is a most unfortunate fact that nowhere in the world of Cricket are there such disputations, such quibblings, such searchings into what may and may not be done under the Laws of Cricket, as there are in India. This must be due to unfamiliarity with the English language

because the vast majority of Indians who play games cannot be the bad sportsmen which all these wrangles, these series of "questions to the M.C.C.", would lead a stranger to suppose.

While there may be something to be said, therefore, for a recent publication named:—"Umpire's Guide" by a Mr. P. N. Polishwalla, in which, in 103 paragraphs, many of which are merely excerpts from the work of others, the author attempts to show Umpires the right road, I must say that in nearly fifty years of active participation in playing and watching Cricket I never found it to be so quarrelsome and argumentative a game as this brochure makes it out to be. Had the Author given us only his interesting diagrams and his strong advocacy of sticking to the Spirit of the Game, and had avoided such silly things as what to do when the ball is in play and it splits in half, and arguments relating to L.B.W., when only half the ball pitches on the wicket and half off it, he would have guided umpires much better than he has done.

As a matter of fact no pair of human eyes can possibly see whether only half the ball has pitched on the wicket at, say, about twenty yards range which is roughly the Good Length area from where the Umpire stands. Allusions to such stupid quibblings on the part of an English notoriety—seeking umpire who started this half-ball farce can only serve to muddle the average umpire in India, who, to judge by Mr. Polishwalla's publication, if I may take that as a criterion, needs clarity not fog on his path.

In one of his Diagrams showing the bare but padded leg of an Indian soldier with his foot on the popping crease and the end of the pad inside the crease Mr. Polishwalla has misled the umpire by stating that the soldier is:—"Not Out" on an appeal for stumping in such circumstances. The author claims that as the pad is *grounded* within the crease the man is:—"In." By employing precisely the same reasoning if that Indian soldier's pad-strap or, apparently, his waist-belt! was long enough to trail on the ground and it touched the ground inside the popping-crease though he was standing on the crease,

or outside it, he would still be "In." Small wonder disputes are frequent in India in the teeth of such teachings.

On page 28, paragraph 64, the Author still further misleads the Umpire and quotes "the Cricketer" wrongly in support of his own error. In 1889, in Notts v. Sussex there was a difference of opinion about the working of the Declaration Rule. In 1919, in the same fixture, Carr "declared" at 354 for 7, and on coming in found the law prevented him from doing so within an hour and 40 minutes of drawing stumps. But the 1889 match was under three-day Match Law while all the county matches of 1919 were Two-Day Matches. The 1 hour and 40 minutes Law, which Carr broke in 1919, did not apply in 1889. The Author omits to mention this.

This Two-Day Match Law automatically applied itself to the fourth Test of 1921 at Manchester *because there was no play on the first day* and Lord Tennyson broke the same Law which Carr had broken two years previously, without either umpire being aware that the match they were standing in was under Two-Day Match Law. Hence, I must remind my Indian readers that it does not *always* do to rely upon some specific instance of this, that, or the other kind *because it happened and was allowed in England*. Even there they make mistakes sometimes!

I feel obliged to refer here as I have to:—"Umpire's Guide" because, as a recent publication, its virtues and faults will be the last to have been read and assimilated by the learning sections of Indian cricket. Although it is marred by too frequent excerpts from the correspondence which its Author has sent to Lord's, which, by the way, must be packed with meticulous questions many of them of no moment or use to the game, this Guide has its points, and its Author is entirely in the right in his view of the K. S. Duleepsinhji incident in December, 1928, in the Quadrangular Tournament at Bombay.

It is possible, perhaps, to twist many of the Laws of Cricket to mean anything but their real meaning but real Cricketers have a better use for their spare time.

They are not the people who make the umpire's life a burden to him. Every cricketer enters a match *expecting* the umpires to make mistakes and hoping only that he, the player, will himself make no more than the umpire does.

My own experience of practical cricket is that Players and Critics and Authors make many more avoidable mistakes than umpires do. We writers are, as a rule, much more blameworthy than they because we have time for consideration and deliberation; they have to make or mar in an instant.

The only grumble I have ever had against any umpire is that some will not stand still while the ball is in the air. Otherwise they are a long suffering community which has at least the satisfaction of knowing that in every case where their decisions have been publicly disputed they and not the disputing player, have always had, and I trust always will have the whole sympathy of every man who is worthy the name of Sportsman. Nothing worse can happen to Cricket, or the Empire whose glorious national Game it is, than that Disputing the Umpire's Decision should become a general habit, or ever be anything but Anathema among right-minded men.

CHAPTER XIX.

CARE OF EQUIPMENT.

It is not selfishness but sound cricket common sense which inspires the wise rule:—"Never lend your bat to any one." A good bat is a priceless possession, irreplaceable; except by another equally good bat. Having got a good bat, tend it, and treat it as a pet child who is the apple of your eye. Just as human beings fall in love with one another at first sight so does a cricketer take a fancy to a bat at first handling. The history of Tyldesley (J. T.)'s great century for England on his favourite ground at Birmingham in 1902, against Australia is one of love at first sight. Lancashire were playing at Bristol on the three days prior to that Test match. Tyldesley took a fancy to the spare bat of one of the players in the Bristol match, played with it there, got runs, and borrowed it for the Test for the good of England. On one of Hobb's tours in South Africa he took a fancy to a Gunn and Moore bat belonging to Rhodes, and made practically all his runs with it on that Tour when he first proved to be the master of "googlie" bowling that he was.

So, having found a bat you like take care of it always. It is very difficult to find a *good* bat in India. There are lots to choose from, but the good ones the well balanced ones of mature not too soft and not too hard wood are perhaps one per cent of the mass. Most bats I have ever seen for sale in this country; and I never see one in a shop without handling it as though the clock had been put back and I should ever again hear the magic word "Play!"; are ill-kept or not kept at all, mere bits of wood, and worth only the price of firewood. So that the buyer is up against a wall at the outset. Assuming, however, that he has bought one he likes he should take it home and wash—that's the right word—wash the face and back of the blade in pure salad oil. *Not* linseed oil for India is my advice. That is usually too thick and heavy unless you can get the very best. I never used anything but the best table salad oil, either

in India or England, and I always treated the blade three times a week on the plains and twice when on the Hills with a *smearing* of oil. Then putting the bat away in a *prone position*, never upright leaning against a wall. And also placing a wedge under each side of the backbone so that the bat-face was level. Otherwise the oil trickled to one side and off on to the floor, an expensive waste of good material. This treatment is for ordinary dry weather.

After playing on mud wickets, whether in the nets, or a match, a different procedure is imperative. The first thing to do then is to wipe off all soft earth with a rag. Then smear oil, back and front, to soften the remaining dirt, and wipe it again with the rag. Then smear again with oil and put it away flat on the floor as already directed.

If the face is very clogged with mud, or has become roughened by usage, get a bit of broken pane of glass, and with its straight edge scrape the bat-face with an absolutely straight down action until all the roughness or dirt has disappeared. Then sand paper the bat face well, oil, and put away.

For carrying a bat about in your cricket bag the best thing is a bag made of light waterproof or American-cloth material so that the oil from the bat does not ooze through on to the pads and clothing.

When cracks and blemishes appear on the blade these must be scraped clean, lightly pegged with three-quarter inch long pegs of bamboo or other firm but not too hard wood, and then the "injured" part should be bound round *once* with a belt of wide adhesive plaster. This is by far the best repairing method. It is cheap, quick, effective and above all clean.

NO CRICKETER CAN APPEAR TOO CLEAN ON THE FIELD IN A GAME OF WHICH CLEANLINESS IS ONE OF ITS ETERNAL AND CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS.

Grubby looking flannels and shirts, ill cared for boots and pads, and a seedy looking bat with bits of twine hanging from its handle or its binding, are the signs by which the World knows at sight the *Non-Cricketer*.

Footwear is a matter of choice but there is one matter in regard to it which should never be allowed to be a matter of choice but one of absolute necessity. That is that whatever may be the footwear its soles must ensure a firm grip of the ground. Personally I am absolutely opposed to rubber soles, which cannot, however good the rubber, give such a good grip for turning or non-slipping purposes that are so essential to getting the best results, as are to be got from *properly* studded leather soles. Rubber soles are more comfortable but are *certainly* more tiring than leather soles in a long day's cricket.

FOR BOWLERS RUBBER SOLES ARE WELL NIGH USELESS. EVERY CAPTAIN SHOULD INSIST THAT HIS BOWLERS ALL WEAR PROPERLY STUDDED LEATHER SOLES.

It is not possible in rubber soles to get the same abrupt check on landing with the forefoot that is always obtainable when the bowler is properly shod. The slack modern method of wearing rubber soles is responsible for some of the many poor bowling results we read about too often.

The best method for arranging studs, or nails protruding at least a quarter of an inch is as shown in Diagram 17. The left, or Fore-foot, ought to have a few more spikes than the right foot. Spikes which screw

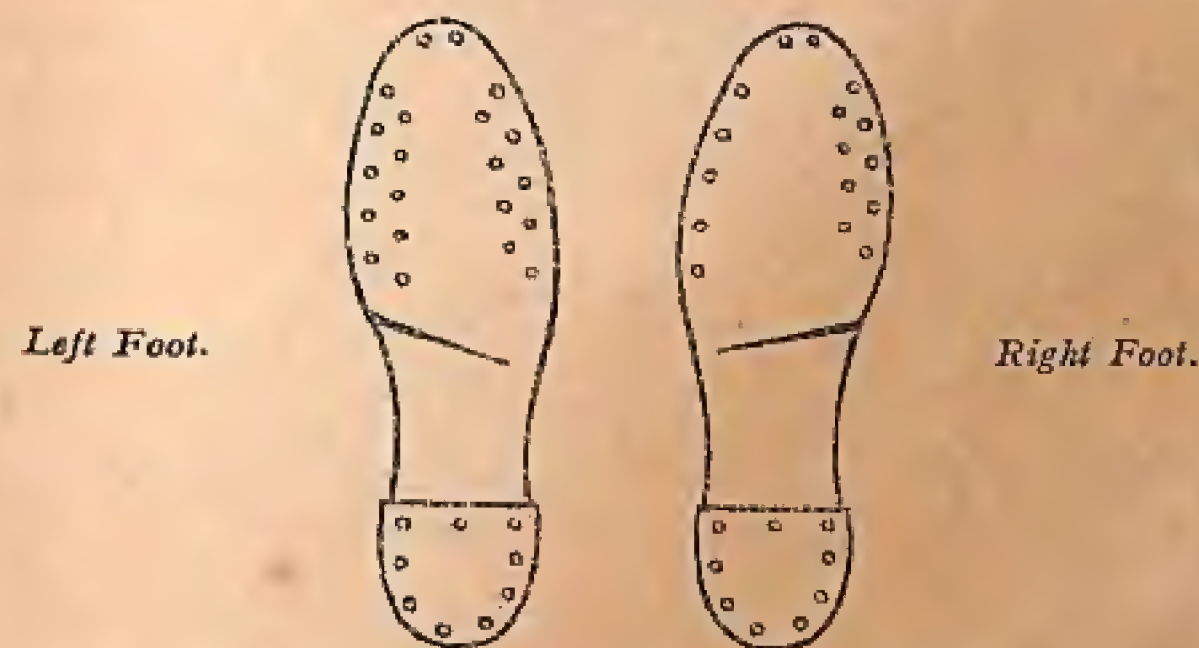


Diagram 17 :—How boots should be spiked.

in are useless. The spikes should be flat headed and about three-quarters of an inch long. If such are hammered in to stout English leather soles they will last longer than any other kind especially if the soles are *slightly* oiled occasionally. Boots need as much care as bats.

Always wear spotlessly clean pipe-clayed boots. Dirty boots are a sure sign of the laziness of their owner, who, if he cannot trouble to clean them himself, can at least see that his servant cleans them. No team can win matches when wearing dirty boots.

The same rules apply to the care of Pads. These necessary impediments should be chosen rather short than long. There is a right and a wrong way to put on the pads. The right way is to first pull the trousers out in front of your shin and therefore tight against your calf. Then, folding over the extended piece of trouser over the *inside* of the right leg place the pad very slightly twisted towards the left and with its centre opening at such a height above or over the top of your boot that the lower end of the pad actually covers the inside ankle bone. Strap the lowest strap first, the top strap last, and securely tuck in all straps, leaving nothing dangling. The same method of fixing on the pad applies to the left leg except that the trouser flap must be folded over the *outside* of the leg and the pad fastened when slightly twisted over the *outside* of the left leg. All pads have a tendency to "work" downwards during an innings but this is mainly because they are an ill-fitting pair. Once on no pad should need re-adjustment except for a strap breaking.

Gloves are entirely a matter of choice. Personally I know of nothing so uncomfortable as the gloves now in such general use with a sort of cloth "hands" covered at the back with unnecessarily large strips of black rubber. The best that can be said of them is that they help the "poor bowler" to get wickets, "caught off the glove" being of more frequent occurrence than it used to be before the days of excessive armour-plating. Personally, I used never to wear gloves and in that state was only once touched on a finger. After taking to a right-

handed glove (the left is *always* unnecessary) I was once hit on the right hand (from N. A. Knox) in something like sixteen years of playing regularly. The best of all gloves is, in my opinion, the black rubber pneumatic Surrey Shield, a round arrangement covered with black rubber pimples, which is held on by two loops for the second and third fingers. This arrangement leaves practically all the valuable sensitivity of touch of the hand and fingers absolutely free to manipulate the bat handle. The prevalent gloved grip numbs that precious sensitivity, and undoubtedly lessens the speed at which the grip of the handle can be changed. All other kinds of gloves and particularly those with strips of felt on the fingers I regard as sheer waste of good material.

For all the other kinds of pads for protection, as worn under the clothing, I have no use whatever, regarding all as an encumbrance to free movement besides being likely to distract the mind of the player who wears them, causing him to imagine he is in danger of being hit where he is wearing the protection. The wicket-keeper is, of course, in a different category altogether and is unwise not to wear a protector.

After all, the batsman has a bat in his hands where-with to stop the ball. It is very rare indeed for any one to get hit in a painful region except after playing either the wrong stroke altogether or the right stroke badly.

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CHAPTER XX.

GENERAL TRAINING AND PRACTICE HINTS.

It is part and parcel of Cricket that the would-be successful player should keep himself in as good physical condition by his behaviour off the field as by his exertions on it. The player who disregards the rule concerning the three Ws—Wine, Women and Wagering—rarely travels far up the tree of cricket. The Secret pages of the history of the game might tell a tale if they could be turned over, but it would be happily a very short tale, soon told. Cricket has no exceller as a clean game in *all* respects. Its votaries may or may not be flannelled fools—we must not quarrel with Kipling over that blunder, which he withdrew—but they are as clean as the kit they play best in.

To keep fit does not entail any going in for fantastic contortions such as gymnastic exercises or physical drill, nor does it mean special food or drink. The chief thing to do is to live natural clean lives, eating and drinking as much as you like of the things that you like *always in sensible moderation*. Many of the best cricketers have been big eaters! Some, like C. B. Fry, were little removed from ascetics. One member of an M.C.C. team to Australia, to wit Knight, of Leicestershire, is said to have lived on a banana a day throughout the tour, but that is incredible. The thing is to find out what suits you and to stick to it; remembering always that the less liquid you imbibe, within reason, on match days the better. They used to tell me in my playing days in India that all alcohol before sunset was poison. That was 35 years ago. It must be very slow poison. I never missed two long pegs at tiffin, another every time I got a hundred and two more in the evening, and at fifty years of age, I beat a youngster of 23, the best of three sets at tennis, and walked another "kid" of thirty stone cold up and down Himalayan foothills. When I started in first-class cricket and they began giving me whiskies and sodas in four inch thimbles the whisky well diluted—small wonder I couldn't play cricket! Sixteen stones avoirdupois

cannot get and keep steam up under such handicaps. It was not until I got back to the genuine peg that the "fours" began to assemble once more, and Life became interesting. These personal reminiscences go to show that there is absolutely no need for physical training or effort other than to be had from match and net-practice.

Indeed, any form of *gymnastic and physical training* is absolutely opposed to first-class success in Cricket. Otherwise why has not the Army or the Navy produced, between them, more than one first-class bowler, to wit, "Doctor" Young of Essex? Certainly not for want of playing Cricket almost whenever and wherever possible. The chief reason is because Cricket is not a muscular game and gymnastics and physical jerks—as they are best known—all mean extra chest and muscle development! Which is precisely what Cricket does not want. Yet P. F. Warner, soon after the birth of "The Cricketer" strongly advocated Physical Training as one means for bringing England back to some of her past bowling glories!!! A crusade which, happily, he did not persist in, for its futility is beyond description.

The best of all Training is Match-Practice. This far exceeds in educational value Net Practice. Which is not to be taken as advice not to hold practice in the nets. Here again the best net-practice is that which, according to the kind of practice specially required, lowers the back or whichever side net is in the way for the time being. It may be necessary to give the Wicket-keeper and the Slips some practice, so take down the back net, station the fielders as in a match and leave the off and leg-side nets standing. Or the Batsman may want to practice Placing to Leg, therefore, remove the leg-side net and bowl to him all the time on the leg-stump and on and outside the pads, having previously placed the field accordingly. This kind of serious practice is much better training than that other damaging, almost useless, kind where four or five players, some of whom never bowl in a match are permitted by the mal-organisation of the Club, or a bad Captain, or both, to inflict themselves on a Batsman who is trying to study the game but who is absolutely prevented from genuine

study by such futile proceedings. Captains and Club officials from the President downwards are responsible for preventing such wastes of time and wear and tear of material. With a very little trouble it is a simple matter to arrange practice "times" and to allot bowlers to the different nets *never permitting more than two at any one net* except that a special Coach may bowl with two others and the Coach should have the "freedom of the nets" to bowl where and when he pleases.

Avoid long walks before a match, and get all the practice in matches that you can, making use of every moment especially before and after your own innings to learn something. There are very seldom dull moments.

FOR THOSE WHO WATCH A MATCH INTELLIGENTLY.

Finally, as regards training, keen and thoughtful attention must be given to the art of running between wickets. This is a study in itself. Success is based upon an indefatigable alertness, a keen sense of time and distance allied to good judgment of place. It is beyond dispute that there are indifferent runners. One of the standing jokes of Cricket concerns that exceptionally keen old cricketer G. J. V. Weigall of Wellington, Cambridge, Kent and I.Z. He made some runs against Oxford and the wags said that Oxford let him get them because they knew that the longer he stayed the sooner would the very strong Cambridge batting side be run out! As it was three suffered the fate. A mild libel no doubt on a real good fellow, but I must add that the only time I was ever "in" with old Gerry Weigall I was run out by yards. But then he always did do things well.

There is a diversity of opinion as to whose call it is when the Batsman cuts or pushes a ball towards deep Third Man, the Striker's call or his partner's. My view is that this is *always* the Striker's call because he alone knows how hard the ball has been hit and is the better judge of the two as to whether he can regain his crease or not.

The best plan is for the two to arrange beforehand which will call either only for Cuts or for all strokes behind the wicket.

The Non-Striker must back up from his end by moving out of his ground *after every ball bowled*. He must do this as a habit, always being very wide awake for the hard-hit return which the bowler partly fields and deflects on to the wicket which the Non-Striker has just left. Usually noted a case of bad luck if the last named is run out this dismissal is always due to the victim's inactivity or want of alertness or both. He has been "caught napping," and *his side has lost a wicket in consequence of his carelessness*. The loss of *his* wicket does not really matter in the least.

Whenever calling "Yes" or "No" to your partner, *shout!* This is not the time for mumbling your words or for the emission of any kind of indistinct sound.

It is a very good habit to get into for one or both—and especially for the one who called first—to say "Two," or "Three," as the case may be at the moment of passing one another in mid-wicket. Or, having passed one another, if one sees the fieldsman has missed fielding, or cannot get to, the ball shout instantly:—"Come another," or "Again," any word to let the partner know that another run is possible and that you *mean* to run it.

CHAPTER XXI.

FIELDING.

While all positions on the field of Cricket are important, and each has an importance of its own, the most important of all the positions are those of First and Second Slip.

Every detail of these positions needs the scrupulous and constant attention of the fielder himself and of his Captain and his Bowler. Thus it is important in what position a Slip stands.

The usual way in which one sees the two slips standing is most emphatically *not* the best way.

These always stand with their chests towards the bowler, and generally (in nine out of ten cases) they stand at least two feet too close to each other. Moreover, they stand side by side which is wrong, instead of second slip being slightly in advance of his fellow.

The best way is to take an imaginary string, tie one end to the off-stump's base and take the other to where First Slip is to stand. Then, draw an imaginary arc on the ground and station Second, and Third Slip (who is *not* Gully as stated in Mr. Polishwalla's "Umpire's Guide" on page 49) on this imaginary curved line.

They will be, thus, all three at the same distance from the stumps, which, in practice they never are, Second and Third Slip always being further from the Batsman than is First Slip.

Hence, the more Yorkers and ankle-high catches Second and Third Slip get than are ever the lot of First Slip.

Having accurately sited your Slips—two are *always* enough—the next thing to be done is to see that they stand properly. The best stance for both is slightly sideways, with their left sides towards the off-stump, their chests towards mid-off or extra mid-off. Here the reasoning is quite clear. This stance presents the palms of the hands and *not the finger tips* towards the ball. Most catches invariably come to one or either side. If the catch comes to the right of the Stance here described his right palm is *already there*.

If the catch comes to the left the mere instinctive action of pivoting round quickly, and quite easily, on the waist axis not only brings the left palm in front of the ball but the swing of the body actually *assists* the right hand to cover up the ball the instant it touches the left palm.

I can hear the demurs at this suggestion from numerous people who have never fielded in the slips in their lives but I fielded there for about twenty-five years and have practised and proved to be absolutely sound that which I now preach.

If the best English and Australian slips do not stand this way I have nothing more to say except that their slip fielding would improve if they did.

Stand with the left foot slightly before the other and never both feet wide apart, with your legs like a pair of compasses open. With one foot just before the other you can jump about ever so much more quickly than with your feet wide apart.

Does the athlete who, of all others, requires quickness from a standing start, *viz.*, he who is competing in a Hundred Yards Sprint start from a wide-apart Stance? No, he stands more or less exactly as I say Slips ought to stand. Why? The better to obtain instant, and the quickest possible, movement.

Both Slips must watch (1) the Ball as it leaves the Bowler's hand in order to judge at the earliest moment its length and its direction; then (2) they must look at the Batsman to see how he means to make his stroke.

It is *absolutely wrong* to look only at the Batsman and his bat, as youngsters are sometimes advised to do. Such advice comes generally from somebody who never fielded slip, or who was unsuccessful when he did, or appears in an article over the name of some cricketer who did not write the article. Exceptions there must be to every rule.

Next in importance are Cover-point and Mid-Off who, if they field properly, save hundreds of runs and catch hundreds of catches in a season. Their first duty is to walk back as the bowler walks back to the beginning of his "run," and then while he runs up so must they go in towards the Batsman at a quickening walk,

until, as the Batsman strikes the ball, they must almost begin to run. Thus, in a full day's play a *good* Cover-Point moves backwards and forwards quite twelve to twenty yards *for each ball bowled*.

In practice times Cover-Point and Mid-Off, but especially the first named, must accustom themselves to one-handed fielding, and the first-named to regular practice of picking up with the left hand and changing over to the right as quickly as possible (unless he is left-handed). Extra quickness and accuracy in effecting this transfer alone sometimes means a good batsman "run out."

Both these fielders must always throw, and throw very hard—no half-measures—at the wicket keeper's or bowler's head. The real aim is *about* head-high, and the trajectory will drop the ball to hands-high and *make just all the difference* between a "run out" and a missed chance.

No thought of hurting the Wicket-keeper or the Bowler must enter the fielder's head, and least of all must he except in the last resort throw at the stumps, or worse even than that, throw a Yorker at the base of the stumps. If the Wicket-keeper or Bowler gets hurt that is their fault for clumsiness in catching or lateness in getting into position—excepting always when the fielder throws a Yorker or half-volley. Then their hurt can, and must be, laid at the fielder's door—and this should be promptly done by the Captain, not by the injured player. His duty is to suffer in silence.

The rules for all Outfields are the same. In the first place

ALL OUTFIELDS STAND TOO DEEP.

Captains are even worse sinners than bowlers in this respect; they are often to be seen waving outfields back and further back, as though the danger zone for catches is right on the edge of the ground, and as though it is easier to catch when running hard towards the Ball with the eyes watering than it is when moving backwards with the eyes securely fixed on the Ball. Whereas neither is the case.

The Danger Zone is from twenty to ten yards from an average boundary.

By far the greater number of catches drop within that belt, a fact which any statistically inclined person can prove for himself if he takes the trouble to make an honest note in writing of every time he sees the ball drop approximately within that ten yards width.

THE CORRECT PLACE FOR OUTFIELDS TO STAND IS NOT LESS THAN EIGHT YARDS INSIDE AN AVERAGE BOUNDARY; OR ABOUT EIGHTY YARDS FROM THE BATSMAN.

All throwing from the outfield should send the ball first bounce to the Bowler or the Wicketkeeper, except when the ground is soft. Then, if possible, send the ball full-pitch!

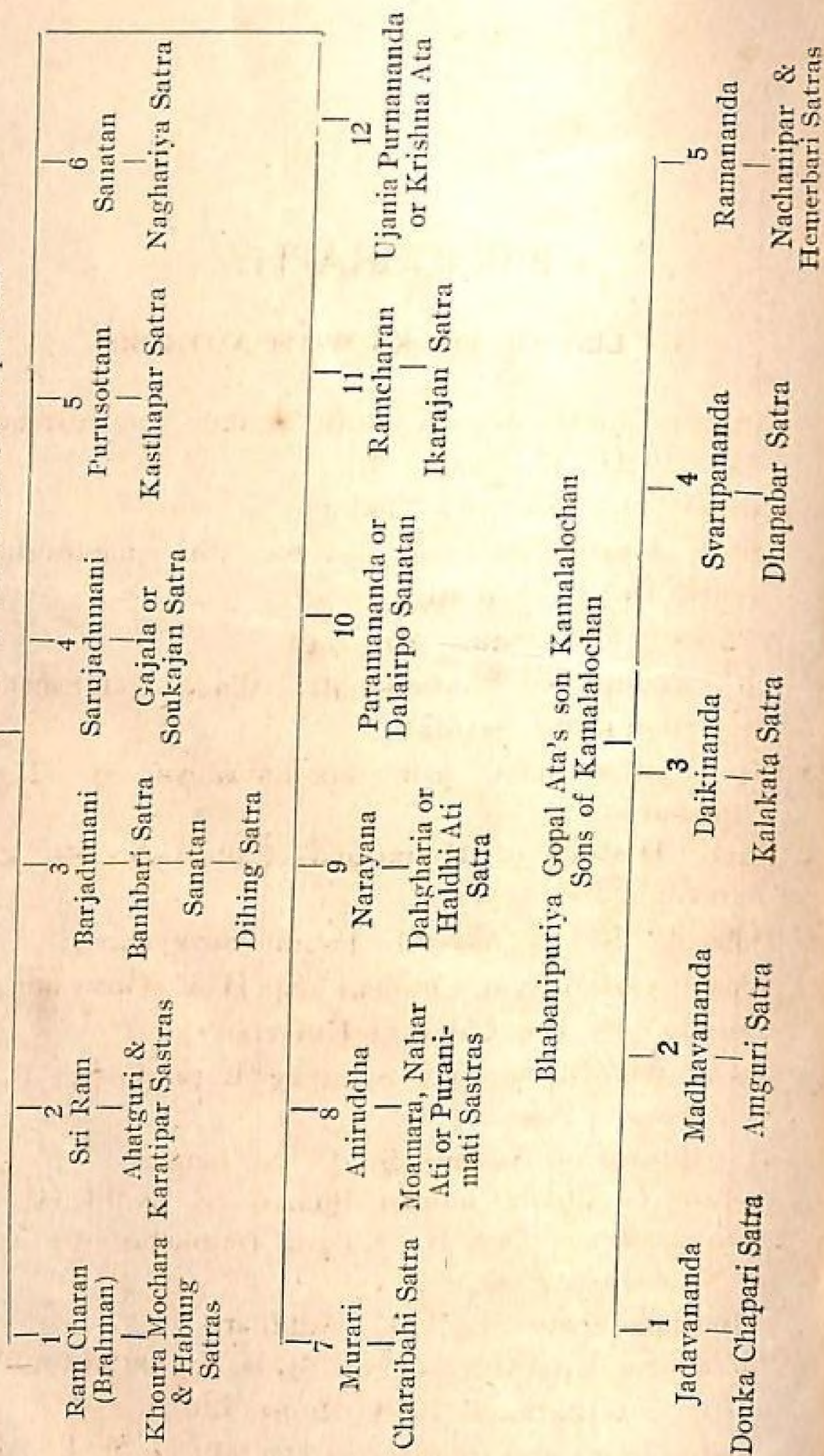
Third Man "out" should lay himself out to "save the two," though, if there are two experienced Batsmen at the wicket, he will scarcely ever do so. Two Batsmen who *mean* to get two runs for all strokes in the deep Third Man direction rarely fail to get two.

In a general way it may be laid down that there are *always* two runs for that stroke; certainly so if the Striker is a fast runner.

The Third Man who stands, or who is posted, close in to save the two costs his side two extra for the boundary too often for the move to be a paying one. It is most expensive of all—and by a strange fatality happens to be most often employed then—to bring Third Man "up" when a side is trying to get runs against time. That is the time to save the fours and let the twos go, if they must.

For Silly Point is required a hard-handed and sure fielder who is fearless, and does not make a fuss if he finds a cricket ball hurts. He should stand not more than ten yards or less than about seven from the Batsman; and *must be very careful to field with scrupulous fairness* by not moving about while the Batsman is making his stroke. Silly Mid-On should stand even nearer than Silly Point, and the same qualities are required of him. Both are "lively" places to field in unless your bowlers have

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